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UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Summary

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2001/4, the present report summarizes the response of UNICEF to the recommendations contained in the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit issued from January through December 2017. Of the five reports publicly issued during the period, three contained recommendations directly relevant to UNICEF.

* E/ICEF/2018/8.

Note: The present document was processed in its entirety by UNICEF.

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I. Introduction

1. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) annually issues reports and notes addressed to the executive heads of United Nations organizations that have accepted its statute. Each report or note contains a series of recommendations for consideration by either the executive heads or the legislative/governing bodies of the organizations. The present UNICEF report to its Executive Board provides, inter alia, a brief overview of the organization's response to relevant reports publicly issued by the JIU from January through December 2017[1] and comments on JIU recommendations that have been directed to UNICEF (see annex I). The complete reports and notes of the JIU and any additional annexes and comments – for example, those by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) – can be obtained through the JIU website (http://www.unjiu.org) or through the hyperlinked titles of each report in section II.

2. Since the submission of the previous report (E/ICEF/2017/8) to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2017, UNICEF has continued to work with the JIU on its various reviews and to follow up on the recommendations contained in the reports. This interaction on issues of common interest has increased the relevance of the JIU reports, improved the implementation of their recommendations and enhanced transparency. Furthermore, as a member organization of the CEB, UNICEF has continued to contribute to the drafting of consolidated responses to various JIU reports.

II. Overview of Joint Inspection Unit reports issued in 2017

3. The three reports of direct relevance to UNICEF are summarized below. For additional comments on the relevant recommendations, see annex I.

A. Donor-led assessment of the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2017/2)

4. UNICEF welcomes the report of the JIU on donor-led assessments. It supports the report's calls for more robust collaboration and strategic dialogue between organizations and donors when planning and conducting assessments, as this can contribute substantially to organizational learning and continuous improvement. UNICEF also supports exploration of the standardization and streamlining of the donor assessments, either through the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) or another platform, to provide donors with the information they need while reducing administrative burdens and costs for organizations. This is in line with mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (CEB comments[2] available in A/72/298/Add.1).

B. Review of air travel policies in the United Nations system: achieving efficiency gains and cost savings and enhancing harmonization (JIU/REP/2017/3)

[1] The JIU issued five reports during this period, of which three were relevant to UNICEF. At the 2019 annual session of the Executive Board, UNICEF will comment on reports that were part of the JIU 2017 programme of work issued after 31 December 2017.

[2] Hyperlinks to CEB comments available at the time of publication are provided.

5. UNICEF appreciates the recommendations and suggestions from this report, which have helped to validate the organization's global travel programme strategy in place since 2014. One of the largest controllable expenses of UNICEF, travel as a percentage of total funding, was reduced from 3.2 per cent in 2012 to 2.8 per cent in 2016, after UNICEF instituted innovative travel management methodologies. Furthermore, JIU recommendation 5 forms part of the organization's spending-optimization road map to achieving additional volume and efficiency benefits in the current quadrennium (CEB comments available in A/72/629/Add.1).

C. Outcome of the review of the follow-up to the Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations by the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2017/5)

6. The report covers the second phase of the two-phased review of United Nations system organizations' acceptance and implementation of the JIU reports and recommendations. The report is a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of organizations' follow-up mechanisms. UNICEF ranked second, along with one other organization, among the entities listed in the report's matrix on maturity of the follow-up process. This ranking highlights the robust and effective response of UNICEF to JIU recommendations and its commitment to their timely implementation, including monitoring. The review and subsequent report provided the opportunity for organizations to reflect on their mechanisms and make improvements. UNICEF was commended for its efforts to improve its follow-up process and would like to express appreciation to the JIU for this report and for highlighting further areas of needed improvement (CEB comments available in A/72/704/Add.1).

III. Status of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations addressed to UNICEF

7. In 2017, the JIU issued five reports, of which two were single-organization reports and three were system-wide reviews. The three system-wide reports contained a total of 22 recommendations, of which 13 (59 per cent) were relevant to UNICEF. These included four addressed to the UNICEF Executive Board and nine to the executive head of UNICEF. The acceptance and implementation status of the 13 recommendations is presented in annex I, and can be summarized as follows, as of March 2018:

(a) UNICEF accepted seven recommendations, of which four had been implemented, and three were in progress;

(b) One recommendation was not accepted;

(c) One recommendation was still under consideration for acceptance;

(d) Four recommendations were relevant to UNICEF, but not under its sole remit for implementation.

8. Annex II details the status of recommendations made by the JIU prior to 2017 that were still open as of March 2018. In summary:

(a) The total number of open recommendations was 57, including 44 issued in the period 2014–2016, and 13 during the period 2008–2013;

(b) Of the 57 open recommendations, 32 were being implemented, 1 (issued in 2016) was still under consideration, and 4 (issued in 2016) were not under the sole remit of UNICEF.

Annex I

Summary of the status of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations addressed to UNICEF, January–December 2017

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Review of management and administration in the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) (JIU/REP/2017/1)	
No recommendations addressed to UNICEF.	
Donor-led assessment of the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2017/2)	
1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board	
Recommendation 1	**Not under sole remit of UNICEF**
The legislative/governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should encourage better access to, dissemination of and exchange of information concerning donor assessments among the Member States and should, in this context, call upon the executive heads to make such assessments publicly available by uploading them in an online global repository to be established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for that purpose not later than 2018.	UNICEF encourages the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) to consider this recommendation. UNICEF proactively hosted an exit meeting for the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) 2015–2016 assessment of the organization with all Member States on the sidelines of the UNICEF Executive Board first regular session of 2017 (6 February 2017), in close collaboration with the MOPAN Secretariat and MOPAN Leads for UNICEF. In addition, UNICEF has made the MOPAN assessment publicly available on the MOPAN website.
Recommendation 2	**Not under sole remit of UNICEF**
Member States that are members of MOPAN should initiate an evaluation of the MOPAN 3.0 methodology to assess its rigor and utility in providing the expected levels of information, and determine its effectiveness in reducing the need for additional individual donor assessments.	UNICEF echoes the views of the CEB that legislative bodies may put forward a view on this issue, but are not in a position to implement the recommended action.
Recommendation 5	**Accepted and implemented**
The legislative/governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads to identify and provide adequate resources and support to the internal audit and evaluation offices of their respective organizations to enable them to provide the required levels of assurance that would help minimize duplication and overlap with external reviews, verifications and assessments conducted by third parties.	Each year, the Evaluation Office and the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations confirm the sufficiency of internal auditing resources through their annual reports to the UNICEF Executive Board. The adequacy of the resources is reviewed by the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee and the Executive Board, which make recommendations to the Executive Director on the resourcing necessary to deliver the required level of assurance.
2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head	
Recommendation 3	**Accepted and implemented**
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should designate, on the basis of the	The Public Partnerships Division serves as the central function for coordination with donors. The multi-

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
volume and variety of donor reviews, an appropriate central function in their respective organizations for coordinating the multiplicity of donor assessments, managing the information provided to donors, standardizing communications, ensuring consistency and tracking the follow-up action on findings and recommendations by the responsible organizational units.	partner MOPAN assessment is managed by the central planning team in the Public Partnerships Division. Other assessments are managed by the Division's focal point for each partnership in cooperation with the entity that originates the assessment – a donor or its contracted entity. This oversight mechanism takes account of the volume and variety of donor assessments, as well as budget limitations. UNICEF holds the view that the assessment of a particular partner is an integral part of the partnership.
Recommendation 4	**Accepted and in progress**
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should engage with donors to determine the key elements in their assessments and should encourage their audit and evaluation bodies, with due regard for their independence, to consider taking these elements into account in their risk assessments and work plans, in order to avoid potential duplication and overlap.	The Division of Financial and Administrative Management is engaging with key donors to update the understanding of UNICEF on their assurance needs. The Office of Internal Audit and Investigations and the Evaluation Office will, where appropriate, take these needs into account in their audit risk assessments and workplans.
Recommendation 6	**Not under sole remit of UNICEF**
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations and the Secretary-General, in the context of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, should develop a common position for initiating a high-level dialogue with donors to determine shared priorities and define a multi-stakeholder assessment platform with a robust framework and methodology to capture a collective reflection of an agency's performance and reduce the need for additional bilateral assessments.	UNICEF will work with the CEB, since this recommendation also pertains to the wider United Nations system. For its part, UNICEF already has a robust assessment framework and methodology to capture the agency's performance against priorities. First and foremost, the basis for institutional results and performance assessment and reporting, as mandated by the UNICEF Executive Board, continues to be the Executive Director's annual report to the Executive Board, together with the data companion to that report, presented to the Executive Board at its annual session. The report covers achievements against the Strategic Plan priorities endorsed by the Executive Board. In addition, UNICEF works closely with MOPAN, the multi-stakeholder assessment platform. Eighteen UNICEF resource partners have joined the platform, representing over 50 per cent of the UNICEF revenue source. UNICEF also works closely with the International Aid Transparency Initiative, having served on its Executive Board, to support the further dissemination of information on multilateral organization results and performance. UNICEF will further closely work to support the Secretary-General's ongoing reform proposal and the System-wide Strategic Document for the entire United Nations development system. This envisages a means for Member States (including, but not restricted to donors) to view the performance of the system and its constituent parts in a more holistic and consistent way,

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
	reducing the dependence on additional bilateral assessments.

Review of air travel policies in the United Nations system: achieving efficiency gains and cost savings and enhancing harmonization (JIU/REP/2017/3)

1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board

Recommendation 1	**Not accepted**
The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request their executive heads, who have yet to do so, to establish by 2019 a consistent percentage cost threshold below which the most direct route may be selected in lieu of the most economic route, taking into account the time thresholds established in each organization's travel policy for the selection of the most economic routes.	The UNICEF travel policy is comprehensive and aligned to the airline industry's fare distribution practices. UNICEF has the most economical fare-search process, configured and integrated and embedded within its ERP/expense process since 2015. UNICEF takes the position that implementing this recommendation would lead to cost increases across the board, and therefore UNICEF does not recommend acceptance by its Executive Board.

2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head

Recommendation 4	**Under consideration**
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so, should ensure by 2019 that effective measures are taken to enforce and monitor compliance with an advance purchase policy, including incorporation of advance planning rules and key performance indicators in travel policies that are regularly measured.	UNICEF is reviewing the effectiveness of its 21-day advance purchase policy. A detailed study on Regional Advance Purchase behaviour and market standards is currently under way. Based on the results, and if necessary, UNICEF policy will be revised. UNICEF operates a decentralized travel programme in order to optimize locally available fares. Currently, UNICEF operations officers in the field hold responsibility for issuing travel authorizations for all office staff and are responsible for ensuring that the travel programme is implemented in accordance with UNICEF policy, including the current 21-day advance purchase policy. Quarterly reviews of travel authorizations issued in SAP provide effective monitoring and oversight capabilities.
Recommendation 5	**Accepted and implemented**
The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should schedule periodic monitoring and assessment to ensure conformity with their own air travel policies, conduct periodic risk assessments and identify measures for further efficiency gains by their next budgetary cycle.	UNICEF conducts monitoring and assessment, and conducts periodic risk assessments, to ensure conformity with travel policies. Moreover, UNICEF has successfully introduced initiatives such as pre-ticket fare searches, market audits, post-ticket fare optimization technology, policy assessments and updates, multi-country air contracts, centralized payments, airline safety categorization and spend consolidation. Collectively, $3 million in cost avoidance with traveler risk mitigation has been realized.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 6	**Accepted and in progress**
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations, if they have not already done so, should encourage the use of online booking tools for air travel, update their travel policies with guidelines for optimal use of such tools, and consider integrating them with their existing systems by 2020.	UNICEF has implemented and integrated in its travel policies an online booking tool for air travel at headquarters, with a 60 per cent adoption rate. Implementing the booking tool across the organization will require offices and regions to coordinate with their individual travel suppliers. With decentralized travel operations, each office will be required to do an individual assessment of having an online booking tool and its viability. UNICEF is planning to conduct a survey to ascertain how many offices have adopted this recommendation by end of 2018. It is, however, noted that online booking tools are not readily available in all countries of UNICEF operation.

Review of management and administration in the Universal Postal Union (UPU) (JIU/REP/2017/4)

No recommendations addressed to UNICEF

Outcome of the review of the follow-up to the Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations by the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2017/5)

1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board

No recommendation addressed to UNICEF

2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head

Recommendation 1	**Accepted and implemented**
The executive heads of organizations who have not yet done so should enhance the consideration of JIU reports/recommendations by their respective legislative bodies, in line with best/good practices identified, by the end of 2018.	UNICEF agrees with the CEB comments regarding this recommendation. UNICEF implemented a significant number of the best/good practices suggested by the JIU to enhance consideration of the JIU reports by the UNICEF Executive Board, such as the following: (a) a standing annual agenda item of the Executive Board meetings dedicated to the JIU; (b) a report of the executive head to the legislative body listing all relevant JIU reports and notes issued during the preceding year, with reference to the JIU website and hyperlinks to the reports/notes and related CEB comments; (c) in that report, a summary of JIU reports relevant to UNICEF for the period as well as a summary of the status of implementation, with comments; and (d) in that report, an annex that includes previous years' recommendations and the status of implementation.
Recommendation 2	**Accepted and implemented**
The executive heads of organizations who have not yet done so are requested to propose to their legislative bodies a concrete course of action to be taken with respect to the recommendations of the Joint Inspection	UNICEF agrees with the CEB comments regarding this recommendation. The annual UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit is presented to the Executive Board for its information. In

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Unit addressed to these bodies, especially with regard to system-wide and several organization reports, by the end of 2018.	its decision 2017/7, adopted at the annual session of 2017, the Executive Board took note of the UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. UNICEF reiterates that it is the sole prerogative of the UNICEF Executive Board to formulate and decide on the course of action to be taken and the final text of the decision in question, and that the secretariat of an organization may merely indicate the need for a decision through a neutral text communicated to its legislative body/Executive Board.
Recommendation 6	**Not under sole remit of UNICEF**
The executive heads of organizations, when considering JIU recommendations intended to enhance coordination and cooperation, should propose the inclusion of the consideration of these recommendations on the programme of work of CEB and its applicable mechanisms with a timeline for taking a decision, with effect from 2019.	UNICEF emphasizes that the agenda of the CEB is decided through a consultative process led by the Secretary-General as its Chair.

Annex II

Summary of the status of all open Joint Inspection Unit recommendations addressed to UNICEF prior to 2017

JIU report symbol	*Recommendation (number) and text*	*Addressee*	*Current status*
JIU/REP/2008/6 Management of Internet websites	(8) Executive heads should report on the implementation of the recommendations addressed to the executive heads, in particular those aimed at reforming website governance, updating website strategy and policy, and implementing multilingualism.	Legislative body	Accepted and implemented
JIU/REP/2010/8 Inter-agency staff mobility	(10) Systematically assess the performance of work/life balance programmes periodically and include, inter alia, a cost-benefit analysis of such programmes as part of their regular performance reporting.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
JIU/NOTE/2011/1 Procurement reforms	(9) Review the social aspect of their procurement policy and practices with a view to ensuring that their policy includes all important social elements, and that guidelines are provided for effective implementation.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
JIU/REP/2011/1 Medical service	(2) Adopt appropriate standards with regard to Occupational Safety and Health issues, taking into account and ensuring compatibility with emerging modifications to the Minimum Operating Safety and Security Standards.	Legislative body	Accepted and in progress
JIU/REP/2011/6 Business continuity	(8) Ensure that business continuity training be incorporated in the career and staff development courses, including induction training, and that periodic training be provided to critical staff in the organizations as an integral component of business continuity management.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
JIU/REP/2012/2 Sick leave	(4) Design and implement an absence management module, in particular absence due to sick leave, for staff with supervisory or managerial responsibilities.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
JIU/REP/2012/12 Strategic planning	(4) Formulate and define relevant system-wide sectoral strategic frameworks through the Economic and Social Council to address the long-term goals established by the 2005 World Summit Outcome, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 60/1, as well as those established by the missions and mandates of the system organizations as a result of global conferences.	Legislative body	Accepted and implemented
JIU/REP/2013/2	(1) Review respective regulatory frameworks governing records and archives management	Executive head	Accepted and in progress

JIU report symbol	*Recommendation (number) and text*	*Addressee*	*Current status*
Records and archives management	(RAM) and recast them into a comprehensive and unequivocal set of principles, practice-oriented procedures and rules to keep pace with changes in the record-keeping environment and technology, and cover the whole life cycle of recorded information. Ensure strict compliance with those principles, procedures and rules for any materials identified as records of the organization or entity.		
	(2) Ensure that all departments, offices and other entities under their responsibility have developed and apply the basic components of records management programmes to all records for which they have managerial responsibility.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(3) Ensure that appropriate time and resources are allocated to institutionalizing tailored RAM training programmes delivered by experienced RAM experts, both at headquarters and in the field, to (a) senior and middle-level managers; (b) records coordinators and other staff involved in RAM activities; and (c) staff at large.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(4) Ensure that information systems that capture, create or manage e-records meet international standards for record keeping and the preservation of digital records and archives.	Executive heads	Accepted and in progress
JIU/REP/2013/4 Management of implementing partners	(8) Institute, for staff engaged with Implementing Partners (and especially staff in country offices), training in fraud awareness and prevention, with emphasis on fraud related to third parties.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(10) Review the capabilities of their existing automation systems, such as ERPs and other database tracking systems, with the aim of supporting the management of Implementing Partners and consolidating related data in these systems. This action should be based on a cost/benefit analysis, taking into account the level of need for such data.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
JIU/NOTE/2014/1 Use of retirees	(2) Set up effective mechanisms to capitalize on the knowledge and experience of staff due to retire and of retirees when rehired through coaching and mentoring programmes, in line with good practices identified.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(4) Organizations should: (a) take immediate action to limit such cases to exceptions which are fully justified and regularly monitored and reported to legislative bodies; and (b) ensure that their employment in senior executive and general service positions is restricted to instances where	Executive head	Accepted and implemented

JIU report symbol	*Recommendation (number) and text*	*Addressee*	*Current status*
	needs cannot be met by current staff, and that they are rehired as consultants, when applicable, with due regard to the specific needs of organizations.		
JIU/REP/2014/1 Resource mobilization function	(5) Organize dialogues with their respective donors to agree upon common reporting requirements which would simplify the reporting process for the respective organizations and satisfy the information needs of the donors with a view to reducing the reporting burden and associated costs.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
JIU/REP/2014/4 Post-Rio+20 review of environmental governance within the United Nations system	(12) Organizations involved in country activities in the UNDAF should: (a) Adopt outreach and training policy; support the establishment of capacity-building in the United Nations country team; and disseminate the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) guidance notes on mainstreaming environmental sustainability and the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into the UNDAF [United Nations Development Assistance Framework] process; and (b) Support the operationalization of the above-mentioned policy and the attendant expertise within the framework of the United Nations country team with the effective participation and contribution of specialists and experts of the United Nations Environment Programme and multilateral environmental agreements, when feasible, as well as with the active use of sector experts of specialized agencies, funds and programmes, who have environmental knowledge and expertise working under the guidance of the Resident Coordinator.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
JIU/REP/2014/8 Non-staff personnel	(12) Ensure and formalize the access of non-staff personnel (including United Nations Volunteers) to mediation, the ethics office, the office of the ombudsman and other informal conflict-resolution mechanisms, and ensure that such personnel have recourse to the policies on the prevention of harassment and whistle-blowing. Furthermore, non-staff should be informed of those rights.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
JIU/REP/2014/9 Contract management	(2) Incorporate in their annual statements of internal controls certifications, by individuals with procurement and contracts management authority that the execution of contracts has been in full compliance with the organization's policies, procedures and rules.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress

JIU report symbol	*Recommendation (number) and text*	*Addressee*	*Current status*
JIU/REP/2015/5 Climate change	(2) Support and endorse the participation of their respective organizations involved in cross-cutting areas directly or indirectly related to climate change in a system-wide United Nations strategy to combat climate change, in a manner consistent with the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21).	Legislative body	Accepted and implemented
	(1) Present to the governing bodies of their organizations a long-term United Nations system-wide climate change strategy responsive to the outcome of COP 21, and request its endorsement and the support necessary for its effective implementation, in order to achieve measurable interim results by 2020.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(3) Organizations involved in areas with clear cross-linkages with climate change should elaborate and agree upon a common methodology to establish criteria to ensure the traceability of specific funding for climate change adaptation and mitigation, seeking consistency and coherence in the context of the climate change regime methodologies.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(4) Promote the development of a common information-sharing system for the measurement and monitoring of the United Nations system activities and resources aimed at addressing climate change, by sector and type of funding, so as to ensure the most cost-efficient and effective delivery of activities to tackle climate change.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(6) Ensure that their organizations follow the UNDG guidance on integrating climate change in the UNDAF and build on existing good practices of engagement with the relevant United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change bodies, for climate change assistance at the country and regional level, in close cooperation with the resident coordinators, to enhance and strengthen capacity-building assistance to developing countries through common country assessment/UNDAFs.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
JIU/REP/2015/6 Ombudsman services	(5) Make it possible for the ombudsman to report to them on systemic issues identified on a regular basis.	Legislative body	Accepted and implemented
	(1) Review, update and disseminate across respective organizations the terms of reference of the ombudsman, giving due consideration to the	Executive head	Accepted and implemented

JIU report symbol	*Recommendation (number) and text*	*Addressee*	*Current status*
	direction provided by the present report and using a staff-management consultation mechanism.		
	(2) Include questions relating to the ombudsman service in staff surveys and responses should be used by management, staff associations and the ombudsman office to increase staff awareness and promote a better understanding of the ombudsman function in the organization.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
	(4) Include in the work programme the development of a case management manual and to seek the cooperation of other United Nations system ombudsmen with a view to achieving a certain level of harmonization across the system.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
	(7) Establish an accountability and appraisal system for the ombudsman services and include the relevant provisions in the ombudsman's terms of reference. The system and the provisions should reflect the specific requirements of the ombudsman function by making accountability and the appraisal process inclusive and participatory for all stakeholders.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
JIU/REP/2016/2 Succession planning	(1) Exercise an oversight role and examine the causes for the lack of, and/or the delay in, the introduction of formal succession planning including the adequacy of current funding; and develop formal succession planning without any further delay, by the end of 2017.	Legislative body	Accepted and implemented
	(2) Instruct human resources management offices to develop and implement appropriate frameworks for succession planning strategies, and devise appropriate guidelines on the succession planning process without any further delay, by the end of 2017.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
	(3) Instruct human resources management offices to adopt the benchmarks set out in the present report with a view to ensuring that their organizations have a sound succession planning process, and should report on the progress made.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
JIU/REP/2016/4 Fraud prevention, detection and response	(5) Conduct a comprehensive corporate fraud risk assessment, as an integral part of their enterprise risk management system or as a separate exercise, addressing fraud risks at all levels of their respective organization, including headquarters and field offices, as well as internal and external fraud risks. Such assessments shall be conducted at least biennially at the corporate	Executive head	Accepted and in progress

JIU report symbol	Recommendation (number) and text	Addressee	Current status
	level, and more frequently, based on need, at the operational level.		
	(6) Develop organization-specific comprehensive anti-fraud strategies and action plans for implementing their respective fraud policies. Such anti-fraud strategies should be based on the organization's corporate fraud risk assessments and shall be an integral part of the overall organizational strategies and operational objectives. Based on the level of fraud risk, proportionate resources should be dedicated to operationalizing the strategies and action plans.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(7) Initiate a review of their internal control framework to ensure that proportionate anti-fraud controls do exist and that fraud risks identified in the fraud risk assessments are adequately addressed in the internal control frameworks.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(8) Ensure that statements of internal controls address the adequacy of organization-wide anti-fraud controls, in accordance with good practices and applicable international standards. In the absence of a formal statement of internal controls, executive heads should certify in their annual reports to legislative and governing bodies that their organization has in place proportionate anti-fraud controls based on fraud risk assessments, and that appropriate fraud prevention, detection, response and data collection procedures and processes exist.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(10) Ensure that proportionate fraud prevention and detection capabilities are an integral part of automation systems' functionalities, including automated activity reports and data-mining modules in their respective enterprise resource planning systems (ERPs).	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
JIU/REP/2016/5 Evaluation of the contributions of the UN development systems on strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis	(3) Establish a network (a working group or task force) that will bring together the different entities' policy, programme and statistics departments in order to define how to better support more effective use of statistics by national stakeholders to achieve national development goals and should develop system-wide guidance for United Nations system entities on this issue.	Legislative body	Accepted and implemented
JIU/REP/2016/6 Meta-evaluation and synthesis of United Nations	(4) Coordinate evaluation activities at the country level so that such activities can be better integrated into the United Nations Development	Executive head	Accepted and in progress

JIU report symbol	*Recommendation (number) and text*	*Addressee*	*Current status*
Development Assistance Framework evaluations	Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluation process.		
JIU/REP/2016/7 Support for small island developing States: final findings	(1) The governing bodies of the United Nations system and of the multilateral environment agreements, taking into account the findings of the comprehensive review, should give precise system-wide coordinated guidance to the organizations so as to ensure that the priorities of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway are mainstreamed in the strategic plans, within the realm of the organizations' mandates, and should encourage all stakeholders to make sufficient and predictable resources available for the effective and accelerated implementation of the Pathway.	Legislative body	Outside the sole remit of UNICEF
	(4) Coordinate the planning and implementation of capacity-building activities in close consultation with the small island developing States and all partners for development so as to strengthen effectiveness and efficiency in providing support to achieve the goals defined in the Samoa Pathway, while avoiding saturation of the absorptive capacity of SIDS at the country level.	Legislative body	Accepted and in progress
	(6) Encourage the allocation of predictable multi-year funding to facilitate the effective implementation of programmatic activities in support of the small island developing States, based on needs assessments prepared by the United Nations system organizations in consultation with SIDS and their relevant partners.	Legislative body	Outside the sole remit of UNICEF
	(7) Ensure, based on the ongoing work of the United Nations Statistical Commission and, when relevant, on the work of the inter-agency forums and expert groups created to advise Member States, that the specificity of SIDS is explicitly considered in defining the elements of monitoring and accountability frameworks to report on progress made on the Sustainable Development Goals, so that processes and indicators are adapted to their needs and priorities identified at the national and regional levels.	Legislative body	Accepted and in progress
	(8) Coordinate their efforts in designing monitoring and accountability frameworks and tools adapted to the capacity of SIDS to monitor	Legislative body	Accepted and in progress

JIU report symbol	*Recommendation (number) and text*	*Addressee*	*Current status*
	and report on the implementation of the Samoa Pathway and other sustainable development-related global mandates, while avoiding the burden of multiple reporting frameworks.		
	(5) The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure the participation of their organizations in the process led by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development to actively contribute to addressing the specificity of SIDS as a special case with tailor-made solutions, and should also ensure that new parameters of eligibility are designed for better access to financing for development for SIDS.	Executive head	Outside the remit of UNICEF
JIU/REP/2016/8 Internal audit function	(9) Ensure that the conditions for effective, independent, expert oversight committees are in place, and that the committees are fully functional in line with previous JIU recommendations, as reinforced in this report.	Legislative body	Accepted and in progress
	(2) Involve the oversight committees and consult with the governing bodies in the hiring of the heads of internal audit/oversight, and in the termination of their tenure.	Executive head	Under consideration
	(5) Ensure that their internal audit services have adequate financial and human resources to expand the use of information technology auditing techniques, and to employ, as appropriate, advanced data analytics and remote auditing, with a view to leveraging technology to provide more economical and comprehensive audit coverage.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(6) Allocate adequate financial and human resources to the internal audit services to ensure sufficient coverage of high-risk areas and adherence to established auditing cycles, as identified by the heads of internal audit/ oversight during risk-based audit planning.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
JIU/REP/2016/9 Safety and security	(1) Ensure that, by no later than April 2018: • Existing host country agreements within their respective organizations reflect the current security threats and contain commensurate security measures necessary to protect United Nations system organizations' personnel and premises • Future host country agreements contain a security annex reflecting the main responsibility of the host country with respect to the security of	Executive head	Outside of the sole remit of UNICEF

JIU report symbol	*Recommendation (number) and text*	*Addressee*	*Current status*
	United Nations system organizations' personnel and premises • Existing and future host country agreements are regularly reviewed to reflect and adapt to changes in the respective security environments		
	(2) Ensure that, by no later than January 2018, a comprehensive system-wide policy for road safety is finalized and ready for implementation within each of their respective organizations.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
	(3) Ensure that, by no later than January 2018, appropriate security compliance mechanisms commensurate with the risk level assessed in each particular duty station are included in the individual performance appraisal systems in place for all staff within their respective organizations.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
	(5) By no later than January 2018, incorporate safety and security compliance indicators in the performance assessments at every management level, including senior management.	Executive head	Accepted and implemented
JIU/REP/2016/10 Knowledge management	(1) Develop knowledge management strategies and policies aligned with the mandate, goals and objectives of their respective organizations, by the end of 2018. Such strategies should be based on an assessment of current and future knowledge management needs and include measures for implementation.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(3) Take incremental measures aimed at embedding knowledge management skills and knowledge-sharing abilities in their respective staff performance appraisal systems, annual work plans, job descriptions and organizational core competences, by the end of 2020.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
	(4) Establish norms and procedures for the retention and transfer of knowledge from retiring, moving or departing staff, as part of the organizations' succession planning processes.	Executive head	Accepted and in progress
JIU/REP/2016/11 Administrative support services	(4) Request technical advisory bodies to examine the results, including benefits realized, of administrative service reform when considering relevant organizational budget proposals, starting with the next budget cycle.	Legislative body	Accepted and implemented

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Annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017

Summary

The present document, prepared in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/8, provides the third annual update on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017. The report includes an update on progress on the plan's priorities, indicators and performance benchmarks.

* E/ICEF/2018/8.
Note: The present document was processed in its entirety by UNICEF.

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I. Introduction

1. The Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017 specifies how UNICEF will promote gender equality throughout its work in alignment with its Strategic Plan, 2014–2017. The plan's implementation culminated in 2017, prompting a period of review and reflection on progress, challenges and lessons learned that are now informing the implementation of the Gender Action Plan's second phase, in conjunction with the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021.

2. The present report highlights the trends and progress of the 2014–2017 cycle. In those four years, the Gender Action Plan was the vehicle through which UNICEF designed clear programmatic results; made institutional investments to boost resources, leadership, expertise and accountability; and reinforced its partnerships, coalitions and presence in gender equality in the international development space. This retrospective suggests that UNICEF has pursued an upward trajectory towards strengthening its role in support of countries and the global community to make progress on gender equality results, and building its own capabilities and accountabilities in gender programming. The progress has not been even on all sides. For example, there has been greater momentum in targeting adolescent girls' priorities than in mainstreaming gender results; and better performance on headquarters and regional targets for gender expertise than at the country level. Several challenges remain, from the effective reporting of results to adequately resourcing gender programming. Progress is nevertheless substantial and tangible, and has contributed to important improvements in the lives and rights of women and children, while providing UNICEF with a foundation for accelerating those efforts over the next phase.

3. During the implementation of the Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017, UNICEF contributed to marked improvements in women's and adolescents' maternal and pregnancy care, access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), including menstrual hygiene, and access to protection and services against violence, especially during emergencies. UNICEF programming has been an important contributor to declining child marriage rates, improvements in adolescent girls' nutrition and emerging declines in female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) rates. There has also been progress in other areas, albeit slower, including in secondary education and skills for girls, the reduction of adolescent girls' risk of HIV/AIDS and in combating sexual and other violence against girls and women. The task for UNICEF in the period 2018–2021 is to work with partners to find more effective, scalable and sustainable solutions to these and other challenges, while it accelerates progress in areas that have already seen achievements.

II. Programmatic results

4. The Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017 programmatic framework outlines a dual approach targeting cross-sectoral priorities that emphasize results for adolescent girls and mainstream gender across the seven Strategic Plan, 2014–2017 outcome areas. The four cross-sectoral targeted priorities include: (a) ending child marriage; (b) advancing girls' secondary education; (c) promoting gender-responsive adolescent health; and (d) addressing gender-based violence in emergencies. In mainstreaming gender in programming, UNICEF has emphasized quality over quantity, with the aim of achieving key results specific to the outcome areas with a strong gender dimension.

A. Targeted gender priorities

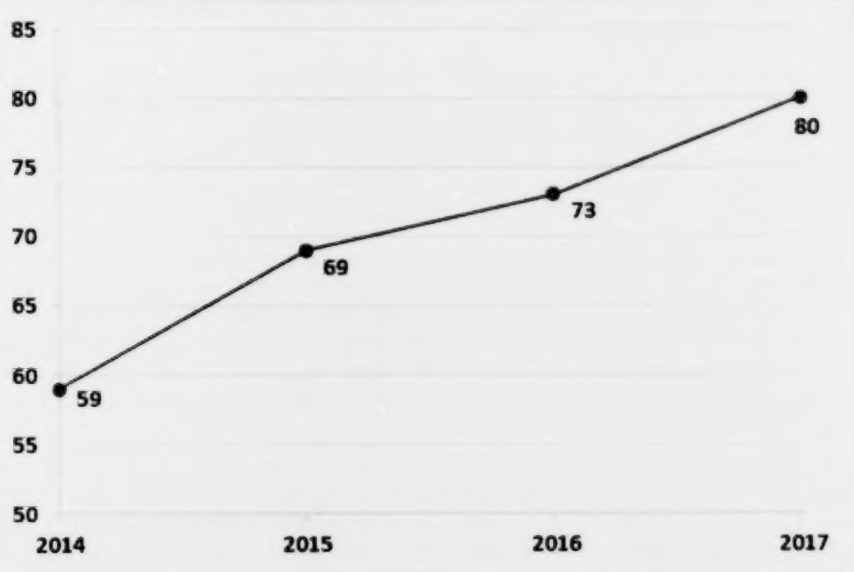
5. The four targeted priority areas were selected for their transformative potential for adolescent girls. An important development in the last four years has been the application of gender-focused, cross-sectoral solutions to the interconnected challenges facing adolescent girls, which has resulted in convergence and efficiencies in programming across the four priorities. Stronger linkages have emerged that connect early marriage outcomes, for instance, to those on reducing teenage pregnancies, or that address girls' access to secondary education as a critical factor in preventing child marriage.

6. Cross-sectoral efforts to empower adolescent girls have also led to more at-scale work at the country level. The Shout Out for Health project in South Africa, rolled out in 2017 through UNICEF partners, the Children's Radio Foundation and Molo Songololo, focused on a combination of gender equality, violence and reproductive health issues, and reached over 700,000 young people through community radio broadcasts. In India, the UNICEF and British Broadcasting Company (BBC) Media Action television drama, AdhaFULL, challenges gender stereotypes by addressing interrelated themes on child marriage, nutrition and girls' education. By the end of 2017, it had reached a cumulative 121 million viewers.

7. Signalling greater recognition of the linkages among gender priorities focused on adolescent girls, the number of countries that targeted two or more such priorities in their programmes rose from 59 in 2014 to 80 in 2017.

Figure I

Number of country offices working on at least two targeted gender priorities focused on adolescent girls, 2014–2017



Ending child marriage

8. In the past four years, UNICEF has played a leadership and collaborative role in global, regional and national partnerships to bring greater attention, resources and

accelerated action to addressing child marriage. Encouragingly, rates of child marriage are beginning to decline at a faster pace in countries with large numbers of girls at risk, and where national actors, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other partners have built momentum over many years, including in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India and Zambia. The latest statistics indicate that the proportion of women who marry as children has decreased by 15 per cent in the last decade, from one in four to approximately one in five, with South Asia leading in reductions. Progress in India has meant that a girl's risk of marrying before she turns 18 has dropped from nearly 50 per cent to 30 per cent; in Ethiopia, it has dropped from around 60 per cent to 40 per cent in the past 10 years.

9. From 2014 to 2017, UNICEF and its partners contributed to the codification of the global commitment to end child marriage through the dedicated target 5.3 of Sustainable Development Goal 5. The concurrent launch of the joint UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage covers 12 countries in Asia and the Pacific, Eastern and Southern Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and West and Central Africa. . The programming and results framework of the global programme have accelerated more coherent, robust, scalable and evidence-based solutions in the 12 countries and catalysed regional initiatives that cover multiple countries in Latin America and Caribbean and Europe and Central Asia, and expanded the scope to emergency settings in the MENA.

10. In 2017, 64 UNICEF programme countries included ending child marriage as a targeted programme priority, 20 more than in 2014. Signalling intensified national ownership and effort, 37 of these now have approved national action plans to address child marriage, compared with only 18 in 2014. The plans for 12 countries are costed and budgeted compared with only 2 in 2014. UNICEF supported the development of these plans by providing a costing and monitoring and evaluation framework in Nepal, for example, and undertaking a budget analysis in collaboration with government ministries in Bangladesh.

11. UNICEF advocacy and support have also resulted in planning and policy changes in countries outside the global programme. In 2017, Plan International, UNFPA, UNICEF and partners supported the adoption of a law banning early marriage in Honduras. In the Dominican Republic, efforts to raise the minimum legal marriage age to 18 years were bolstered by a soap opera-style public campaign broadcast to 23 million people to shift perceptions on child marriage.

12. Increasing girls' opportunities to acquire education and life skills and access health services serves as a preventative measure against child marriage; it also helps to mitigate the negative consequences for girls already married as children. In the period 2016–2017, through UNICEF programming, over 2 million adolescent girls at risk of child marriage received life skills and school attendance support. In India, close to one million adolescent girls benefited from life skills interventions designed to empower them and reduce child marriage.

13. Through the Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017, UNICEF reached 11.6 million people in 66 countries with community-based messaging on child marriage, notably through dialogue, interactive theatre and mass media initiatives. Advocacy and partnerships with faith-based and traditional leaders were also instrumental in shifting attitudes and mobilizing action against child marriage. In 2017, through interactive theatre focused on child marriage and gender-based violence, UNICEF reached more than 33,000 men, women and children in Yemen. Bihar, a high child-marriage prevalence state in India, launched the first large scale, multi-agency initiative to end

child marriage, and reached over 600,000 government officials, an estimated 10.4 million adolescents and some 24 million people overall, through sustained media and community mobilization.

Advancing secondary education for girls

14. Secondary education for girls progressed globally in the period 2014–2017. Lower secondary school enrolment among girls has been increasing, and the percentage of countries in which girls are disadvantaged fell from 41 per cent in 2014 to 36 per cent in 2017. At the same time, the proportion of countries that offer equal access to secondary schooling for women and men declined from 38 per cent in 2013 to 35 per cent in 2017, indicating the complexity of achieving progress on gender equality in education.

15. Government commitment to girls' secondary education increased during the Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017 period. The number of programme countries in which girls' secondary education was a budgeted government priority rose from 27 per cent in 2013 to 35 per cent in 2017. Fifty-eight UNICEF country programmes now implement actions to advance girls' secondary education results, compared with 30 in 2014. UNICEF supports system-strengthening and targeted interventions that address financial and gendered barriers to girls' access to secondary education, improve gender-responsive teaching and learning, build community engagement and develop girls' life skills.

16. During the period 2014–2017, 14 countries across five regions were part of a coordinated effort to prioritize girls' secondary education through cross-sectoral programmes, new partnerships, robust evidence-generation and coordinated advocacy. In Niger, advocacy resulted in a presidential decree to raise the compulsory age of schooling for girls to 16 years, an important step towards realizing girls' right to education in a country in which over 90 per cent of the poorest girls of lower-secondary-school age are out of school.

17. UNICEF has contributed to strengthening gender-responsive education systems. In 2017, the Global Partnership for Education, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and UNICEF issued guidance on gender-responsive education sector plans to strengthen national plans and budgets. An UNGEI-led workshop, attended by government delegations from Afghanistan, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan, developed regional capacity in gender-responsive sector planning.

18. In several countries, UNICEF contributed to overcoming financial barriers to educational access by supporting cash-transfer schemes that enable girls to stay in school. In Nigeria, an impact evaluation of a UNICEF-supported cash-transfer scheme showed a net increase of 30 per cent in girls' enrolment. In Madagascar, the Let Us Learn programme provided cash transfers to more than 100,000 girls in seven regions, allowing over 21,000 out-of-school girls to access catch-up classes and re-enter formal school. Morocco addressed the sociocultural barriers to girls' education through awareness sessions and family visits to school campuses, which increased transition rates for girls from school to college from 35 per cent in the period 2016–2017 to 54 per cent in the period 2017–2018. In partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNFPA, UNICEF supported the Government in Swaziland to roll out life skills sexuality education to 122 secondary schools across the country.

19. UNICEF has helped girls to learn relevant skills and supported Governments to improve gender-equitable skills development, providing adolescent girls with opportunities to transition from education to decent work. In Nepal, 34,000 adolescents, more than half of whom were girls, benefited from social and financial skills education and access to spaces to expand their social network, bolstering their employability. In Lebanon, information technology-based projects, such as Girls Got IT, promoted science, technology, engineering and mathematics as career pathways for girls, reaching 19,000 girls in 2017.

20. Addressing school-related gender-based violence has become a priority in efforts to keep girls in school. UNICEF research in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Togo and Zambia shaped recommendations for national actions now being tested in several countries. In Ethiopia, this research informed the inclusion of relevant data within the 2016–2017 national education management information system. As a result, the documentation and reporting of school-related gender-based violence increased from 478 schools in 2016 to 580 schools in 2017. In Sierra Leone, UNICEF worked with the Government to develop and pilot a national school safety guide in 924 secondary schools, focused on improving safety features and training principals, teachers and student mentors.

Promoting gender-responsive adolescent health

21. From 2014 to 2017, UNICEF was part of a movement to place gender-responsive adolescent health more prominently on global and national agendas to advance financing, services, information and access tailored to the needs of adolescents, particularly girls. UNICEF played a central role in integrating "adolescent" in reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the Every Woman, Every Child strategy. UNICEF is a key member of the Every Woman, Every Child H6 partnership and, in May 2017, launched the Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents guidance note to support country implementation. UNICEF has also continually participated in and provided expertise on gender to the Lancet Commission on adolescent health.

22. Stronger national and global commitments are translating into important gains in some health outcomes for adolescent girls. The number of countries in which 80 per cent or more of adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years are able to access skilled birth attendance during delivery increased from 39 in 2013 to 71 in 2017. The number of countries with at least 80 per cent antenatal care coverage for girls aged 15 to 19 years also increased, from 21 in 2013 to 35 in 2017. Given that one in five adolescent girls still becomes a mother, these tangible improvements in pregnancy care are important components of the basic right to reproductive health for girls. UNICEF has supported Governments in developing and implementing plans to reduce adolescent pregnancy; 101 countries reported budgeted plans in 2017, compared with 83 in 2014.

23. The Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017 frames gender-responsive adolescent health as a multi-component concept that includes adolescent pregnancy and other essential aspects of puberty and reproductive health, such as anaemia reduction, menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and HIV/AIDS prevention. UNICEF country offices have increasingly welcomed this approach. Ninety country programmes prioritized gender-responsive adolescent health in 2017, compared with 62 in 2014.

24. During the period 2014–2017, UNICEF supported the development and implementation of national frameworks using a multi-component, interconnected approach to gender-responsive adolescent health. In 2017, Thailand launched its first

comprehensive framework to promote adolescent health and participation, while Uganda finalized its Multi-Sectoral Strategic Framework for Adolescent Girls, addressing HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and violence against children. The National Plan to Reduce Adolescent Unintended Pregnancies in Argentina incorporated findings from adolescents' views on pregnancy, suicide and sexual abuse, and established relevant policies and health protocols.

25. The relevance of gender-responsive adolescent health care for young girls and boys and the importance of their playing a direct role in their own health care is evident in the growing number and scope of digital platforms on the topic in UNICEF programming targeted towards adolescents that promote community participation at scale. In Argentina, UNICEF launched the online platform Hablemos de Todo to promote adolescent awareness on sexual and reproductive health, gender, violence, suicide and substance abuse. In just six months, the site received more than 120,000 visits and its chat function allowed UNICEF to respond to more than 1,300 queries. Similarly, UNICEF collaboration in Thailand with the Path2Health Foundation's online platform lovecarestation.com has reached 150,000 adolescents with information on sexual, reproductive and mental health, while 2,500 adolescents have accessed online counselling and referral services. Around 2 million adolescents have also benefited from information on reproductive health and youth-friendly health services via three special episodes of Teen Mom, a popular online cartoon series.

26. Several countries have used U-Report to reach adolescents at scale with health information and services and to engage them in conversations around taboo subjects like MHM. In Mozambique, the SMS Biz initiative gives young people access to personalized information and services on sexual and reproductive health, HIV and gender-based violence. In June 2017, SMS Biz successfully registered more than 100,000 young people aged 10 to 24 years – more than double the initial target. Counsellors currently receive and respond to about 5,000 questions daily.

27. Menstrual hygiene management has become a critical area of UNICEF programming in the past four years. An increasing number of countries link MHM outcomes to girls' education, gender-based violence in schools, puberty and sexuality education and change in community gender norms. From 2014 to 2017, the number of countries implementing MHM in WASH in Schools programmes doubled from 22 to 44. UNICEF directly supported 7,835 schools with girl-friendly WASH programmes in 2017, bringing the number of schools covered during the period 2014–2017 to more than 50,000.

28. Zambia provided gender-segregated toilets and MHM facilities in 104 primary schools in 2017, benefiting an estimated 19,000 girls. In Sierra Leone, WASH programmes in 226 primary schools constructed latrines with specific menstrual hygiene spaces, with access for almost 21,000 adolescents. In Cambodia and Jordan, UNICEF worked with government ministries to develop national WASH in Schools standards that are gender-sensitive, include guidance on MHM and provide for disability accessibility.

29. UNICEF supported Governments to develop teaching and learning materials to prepare girls for menstruation and dispel misconceptions and stigma. A partnership with the National Union of Eritrean Women and the Government of Eritrea provided 110,000 adolescent girls with MHM materials and information in 2017. In Afghanistan, UNICEF supported curriculum changes to introduce MHM education in grade five rather than eight, as well as the release of a graphic storybook that targets men and boys in efforts to remove stigma around menstruation.

30. Anaemia reduction among adolescent girls is also a growing priority. Fifty-six countries had plans that targeted anaemia reduction for girls in 2017, up from 27 countries in 2013. In 2017, UNICEF helped Afghanistan to provide weekly iron-folic acid supplementation to 1.5 million adolescent girls (about 95 per cent of all school girls) in 33 provinces. In India, 35.5 million adolescent girls and boys were reached. Ghana launched its Girls' Iron-Folate Tablet Supplementation Programme in October 2017, and weekly reached 600,000 adolescent girls aged 10 to 19 years through school and health facilities.

31. On HIV/AIDS among adolescents, there is mixed progress, as adolescents continue to be at unacceptably high risk. In 2017, 13 more countries reported sex-disaggregated data on HIV testing and counselling among adolescents, up from 18 in 2013. The number of countries with national policies to implement sexuality or life skills-based HIV education in upper primary schools also increased from 28 in 2013 to 35 in 2017. Progress was slower in countries with national strategies that include proven high-impact, evidence-based interventions to address HIV among adolescents, increasing from 26 countries in 2013 to 33 in 2017.

32. The National AIDS Strategic Framework and the Adolescent Health Strategy, 2017–2021 were launched as complementary initiatives in Zambia in 2017, and include HIV testing and counselling, condom distribution and antiretroviral therapy. In South Africa, UNICEF contributed to the Government-led She Conquers campaign, a multi-pronged initiative targeting adolescent girls and young women and aimed at preventing new HIV infections, reducing teenage pregnancy, keeping girls in school, addressing gender-based violence and creating economic opportunities.

Addressing gender-based violence in emergencies

33. Reflecting the number and scale of humanitarian emergencies in 2017, 52 country offices included gender-based violence in emergencies as a targeted priority, 11 more than in 2014. UNICEF reached 3.6 million women and children in 2017 with violence response and risk-mitigation services, including in Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, South Sudan and the Sudan.

34. In 2017, UNICEF launched the Gender-based Violence in Emergencies help desk in partnership with Social Development Direct to support gender-based violence specialists and non-specialists in UNICEF and its partners with rapid responses to queries and access to analysis and evidence. In addition, UNICEF scaled up capacity in 16 high-risk countries to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. More than 1.6 million women and children who had experienced or were at risk of experiencing sexual violence received multi-sectoral support services. In 2017, UNICEF continued to develop and support safe spaces for women and children. Over 60,000 women and girls in Lebanon and over 10,000 in Iraq accessed safe spaces. In the Syrian Arab Republic, UNICEF and UNFPA set up a safe house for women and children survivors of violence with temporary protected accommodation, specialized psychological support and health, education and legal services.

35. Strengthening systems to improve core service provision is an essential part of programming on gender-based violence in emergencies. In 2017, trainings for service providers covered the clinical management of rape, case management, working with child survivors, undertaking safe referrals and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. In Croatia, UNICEF integrated gender-based violence into an extensive emergency-preparedness training for Red Cross frontline staff. In Iraq, mobile teams were trained on violence case management and, in collaboration with UNFPA,

UNICEF successfully advocated for the Government to endorse protocols for the clinical management of rape. In Jordan, UNICEF supported a quality upgrade of services provided to female survivors of violence, in compliance with international standards and national protocols.

36. Working with the WASH sector continues to be a priority, specifically in the areas of MHM, the provision of dignity kits, razing barriers to access and including women in the design of interventions. In camps for internally displaced persons and refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic, women's concerns about accessing sanitation facilities safely at night in the absence of adequate lighting were highlighted and led to the procurement by UNICEF of solar lighting for latrines and the distribution of portable lamps to women and girls.

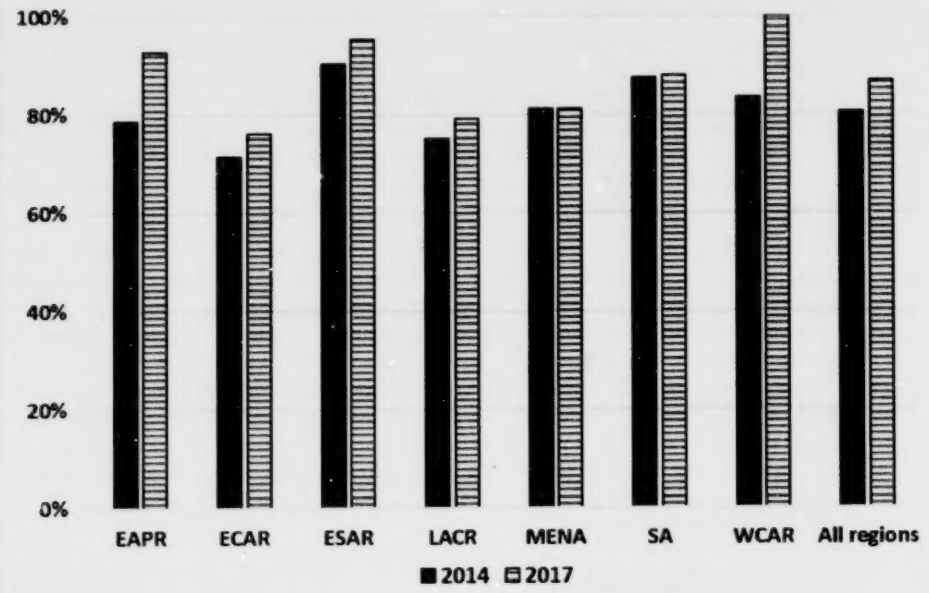
37. Overall, progress on targeted priorities focusing on adolescent girls has been substantial, but insufficient. UNICEF has worked with partners to demonstrate the importance of links across the different aspects of adolescent girls' lives, but national investments and the strengthening of such critical national and subnational systems as education, health, social protection have accelerated in only a handful of countries. There is a lack of feasible financing options and national capacity to deliver quality services to adolescent girls that help them to overcome deep-rooted, gender-based disadvantages that are further exacerbated by poverty, ethnic identity, conflict and disability. Under the Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021, UNICEF will be seeking partnerships, solutions and resources that can more urgently deliver at scale for the largest generation of adolescent girls.

B. Mainstreaming gender

38. In 2017, 87 per cent of all UNICEF country programmes included one or more gender mainstreaming results, an increase from 80 per cent in 2014 (see figure II). As is common in many organizations, defining the concept of "mainstreaming" in concrete programmable terms has not always been easy. However, in the last two years of the Gender Action Plan, there have been signs in almost all sectors that UNICEF country offices are starting to consider the scope and quality of gender programming in more definable and tangible ways.

Figure II

Percentage of countries that include one of more gender mainstreaming results, by region, 2014 and 2017



Abbreviations: EAPR: East Asia and the Pacific; ECAR: Europe and Central Asia; ESAR: Eastern and Southern Africa; LACR: Latin America and Caribbean; MENA: Middle East and Northern Africa; SA: South Asia; WCAR: West and Central Africa.

Health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS

39. The work of UNICEF in health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS supports national improvements to women's maternal health care. There has been important progress in the last four years in helping countries to design better policies, plans and coverage on such key services as antenatal care, skilled delivery, maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT), and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT). In its early implementation period, the Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017, did not systematically take a gendered perspective on the quality of maternal care or the barriers women face in seeking health care for themselves and/or their children or in their role as health-care providers. Similarly, the sex disaggregation of child health and survival data and the examination of gender discriminatory practices were inconsistent. In the past two years, however, these key gender dimensions have gained traction as important programming principles, and represent a promising foundation for further enhancement under the Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021.

40. UNICEF has contributed to steady global progress on basic maternal and neonatal care. Coverage on critical indicators has shown major improvement, exceeding targets. In 2017, 98 programme countries reported that at least 80 per cent of live births benefited from skilled attendance, almost double the number in 2014 (51) and far exceeding the target of 60 countries. Similarly, antenatal care coverage of 80 per cent or more for pregnant women was achieved in 52 countries, up from 18 in 2013 and exceeding the target of 25. There was also progress in MNT elimination. Three more

countries (Ethiopia, Haiti and the Philippines) eliminated MNT, bringing the total number of countries having eliminated MNT to 44 in 2017 against the target of 59 by 2020.

41. Outcomes related to HIV in maternal health have also shown progress. The number of countries that provide at least 80 per cent coverage of lifelong antiretroviral therapy (ART) for all pregnant women living with HIV has increased dramatically from only 1 in 2013 to 11 in 2017. In humanitarian settings, coverage of PMTCT increased from 54 per cent in 2014 to 81 per cent in 2017.

42. Programme countries have advanced less rapidly in supporting gender reviews of countries' nutrition policies or strengthening national management information systems to disaggregate data on nutrition by sex. From 2014 to 2017, the number of countries that conducted a gender review of nutrition strategies increased from 22 to 28, while the number of countries that reported systems with sex-disaggregated data on nutrition increased from 92 in 2014 to 96 in 2017, short of the target of 100 countries.

43. One of the most promising developments on gender mainstreaming has been the Every Mother, Every Newborn initiative that UNICEF began implementing in health facilities in Bangladesh, Ghana and the United Republic of Tanzania in the period 2014–2015. The approach includes respectful maternity care that prioritizes the dignity of mothers by improving the interpersonal communication skills of service providers and increasing the availability of functional toilet and hand-washing facilities. The success of the effort in these countries led to the expansion of Every Mother, Every Newborn to eight additional countries in 2017: Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan and Uganda.

44. Other important emerging areas for the effective mainstreaming of gender in health include removing financial and mobility barriers for women; increasing women's participation in influencing and determining better health outcomes for themselves and their children; and recognizing women's role as health-service providers. The Imarisha Afya ya Mama na Mtoto programme, initiated in 2014 in Kakamega County in Kenya, delivers cash payments over two years to vulnerable pregnant and lactating women to encourage them to use maternal and child health services. With UNICEF support, the programme reached more than 30,000 mothers through 25 health facilities. Concurrently, UNICEF supported the passage of the Kakamega County Maternal and Neonatal Child Health Bill, securing 3 per cent of its annual health budget for the cash transfers and at least 1.5 per cent to pay community health volunteers, who are largely female.

45. The number of countries that analyse sex-differentiated infant and child mortality estimates has remained static, at 42, since 2014, well short of the target of 62 by 2017. However, in the last two years, addressing sex differentials in newborn mortality and care in countries in which they are large, such as Bangladesh and India, has become an important priority for UNICEF. Gender disparities that favour boys, as shown in the 20 to 25 per cent higher admission rates for male babies, point to pervasive son-preference practices in South Asia. UNICEF is undertaking a multi-country gender barrier study to identify parental factors involved in discrimination against newborn care for girls and to develop strategies to address them. Current strategies being tested include provider training, better information for parents and the facilitation of travel and other costs to incentivize improved health care for female babies.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

46. From 2014 to 2017, gender results from UNICEF-supported countries to improve WASH access and reach, especially in emergencies, showed a positive trend and a beneficial impact on women and girls. In that period, UNICEF WASH programming accelerated gender mainstreaming efforts, both in meeting woman-specific WASH needs, including in health and educational facilities, and regarding menstrual hygiene as well as in increasing women's influence and decision-making roles in WASH initiatives. UNICEF direct support, for example, helped equip over 1,500 health-care facilities in 49 countries with WASH facilities, allowing for better-quality maternal health services.

47. In 2017, in 148 countries, 75 per cent or more of households had access to an improved source of drinking water, exceeding the target of 131 countries, compared with only 116 in 2014. In 120 countries, 50 per cent or more of the population had an improved sanitation facility, compared with 106 in 2014. The number of countries in which one third or more of the population practised open defecation declined from 21 countries in 2013 to 17 in 2017. UNICEF support led an estimated 39 million people in 50,000 communities to abandon open defecation in 2017, while in the period 2014–2017, UNICEF supported over 60 million people to abandon open defecation. In emergencies, UNICEF provided 32.7 million people with water, 9 million people with sanitation and 28 million people with critical hygiene information and services.

48. In the same period, UNICEF supported the strengthening of WASH-sector governance, including policies and budgets that led to important benefits for girls and women. In Pakistan, UNICEF-supported local advocacy efforts led to a 28 per cent increase in public-sector WASH budgets, which immediately resulted in increased sanitation financing, enabling 847,000 women to gain access to safe sanitation facilities. In Ghana, UNICEF supported 375 communities to mainstream gender in community-led total sanitation, involving 95,000 women and girls. As a result, more women in targeted communities took on key decision-making positions, developed income-generation and business skills as latrine artisans and became hygiene advocates. In India, 1,600 women received capacity-building support to join the politically prominent, male-dominated front-line worker cadre known as WASH mobilizers to lead activities to promote open defecation-free villages in the states of Bihar and Odisha.

49. UNICEF WASH interventions in emergency situations also supported women and girls. In Yemen and Somaliland, investments in water infrastructure reduced the exposure of women and girls to violence while collecting water by reducing the distances they needed to travel. In Bangladesh, the site of the Rohingya refugee crisis, feedback from women and girls is an important factor in assessing the relevance of the sanitary materials provided and in devising measures to make latrines safer.

Education

50. During the period 2014–2017, UNICEF accelerated gender-mainstreaming efforts in education to address issues beyond gender parity in school enrolment rates, including gender dynamics in learning and teaching, the gender dimensions of curriculum pedagogy and learning outcomes and the increased disadvantage that girls face in accessing education in emergency settings. Improvements in sex-disaggregated, gender-relevant education data have also been a high priority.

51. Globally, gender parity in primary-school completion was achieved in 2008, although completion rates fell slightly, to 90 per cent, in 2016. Achieving gender parity among primary out-of-school children is a challenge that UNICEF and partners continue to address, with 34 million girls out of school compared with 29 million boys. Girls are more likely to be out of school in the Caucasus and Central Asia, Northern Africa, Southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia.

52. UNICEF continues to strengthen data and evidence on gender and education. Research conducted as part of the Out of School Children Initiative was used by Governments to inform policy responses to gendered barriers to education in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Timor-Leste and the State of Palestine, most often with a focus on bringing girls back to school or ensuring that they start school at the right age. In Zambia, the UNICEF-supported Data Must Speak initiative has developed school profiles for over 8,000 primary schools, providing data on school dropouts disaggregated by gender.

53. In recognition of the role that curriculums and pedagogy can play in perpetuating gender discrimination, gender mainstreaming was applied to school-based, in-service teacher education in Myanmar. This included developing guidelines for ensuring gender balance among teachers and facilitators for trainings and workshops and in depicting children in textbook illustrations.

54. In humanitarian crises, accelerated learning programmes located close to communities can be an important means for ensuring girls' access to schooling. In Afghanistan, UNICEF support resulted in the enrolment of 276,000 children (59 per cent girls) in over 10,000 community-based schools, while 118,000 children (73 per cent girls) were enrolled in 4,000 accelerated learning centres.

Child protection

55. Mainstreaming gender in child protection has required a reassessment of the assumption that protecting both boys and girls constitutes gender-responsiveness. While in areas such as FGM/C, the unique risk that girls face has been well understood, the gendered dimensions of violence against girls, boys and women emerged as programming concerns only in the period 2016–2017, following a 2015 evaluation of UNICEF work on violence against children and the evolution of the End Violence Against Children partnership. Concurrently, the importance of sex-disaggregated, gender-relevant data on violence against children has also increased, as have the gender dimensions of strengthening civil registration and vital statistics systems. Programming efforts in these areas are evolving and will require intensification in the period 2018–2021.

56. UNICEF supported programming to increase girls' and boys' capacity to identify, prevent and/or report sexual violence. The number of countries in which at least 75 per cent of the target at-risk population has such capacity increased slowly from 9 countries in 2014 to 15 in 2016, then increased dramatically between 2016 and 2017 to 31 countries, a clear sign of gender mainstreaming in child protection efforts. In addition, by 2017, 51 countries undertook UNICEF-supported gender reviews to improve child protection-related policies, more than double the number in 2014.

57. In 2017, UNICEF supported the improvement of age and sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis of violence against children in Lesotho, where all district police stations received capacity assistance for data disaggregation for reported abuse cases against children, including the age and sex of perpetrators. Similarly, in Malawi, data

collection on gender-based violence and violence against children was strengthened by the established of mobile reporting at the community level in almost all districts.

58. The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting has made progress in addressing FGM/C in the last four years. Thirteen out of 17 countries now have comprehensive legal and policy frameworks, and 12 countries have allocated budget lines for implementation. In 2017, preventive and protection services were provided to 870,000 girls and women at risk of or affected by FGM/C and 6.1 million individuals in 2,960 communities made public declarations of FGM/C abandonment through community-based education, dialogue and consensus building. In Burkina Faso, community dialogue reached 64,500 people, including 1,200 religious/traditional leaders, who became favourable to ending child marriage and FGM/C. In addition, media campaigns and empowerment activities reached an estimated 1.6 million people.

59. There is also growing awareness of the links between violence against children and violence against women. UNICEF provided support to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to develop and implement its National Plan of Action to End Violence against Women and Children, consolidating protection efforts under a single coordination structure.

60. Gender disparities within civil registration and vital statistics systems are an emerging area of concern. In 17 countries, gender disparity in birth registration exceeds 2 per cent, and there is a global disparity in legal identity for women and girls. To address this issue, UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees together are leading the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness, which includes advocacy to remove gender barriers on nationality laws in 15 countries.

61. UNICEF is examining more widespread gender discriminatory practices around birth registration, including the requirement for the presence or naming of a father as a precondition for a birth certificate, which, in many countries, prevents or discourages single mothers, rape victims, sex workers, women in polygamous unions, child brides and the large number of wives without influence on or ready access to their husbands from registering the birth of their child. A 2017 UNICEF study in Haiti showed that a lack of knowledge and gendered social perceptions contributed to the low rate of only 15 per cent of births registered by single mothers.

Social inclusion

62. In 2017, gender mainstreaming in social inclusion focused on strengthening women's and girls' ability to improve their access to and control of public resources. The number of programme countries with a national social protection plan that included gender elements increased from 78 in 2016 to 87 in 2017. Ninety-one countries revised their domestic legislation to align with the concluding observations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, compared with 82 in 2014.

63. UNICEF supported the expansion of cash transfer programmes in 38 countries in 2017, of which 15 were facing humanitarian situations. A key aspect of the humanitarian cash transfer programme in Yemen was to reach mothers or female caretakers as primary beneficiaries. This entailed extensive advocacy at the community level and a delivery infrastructure that required identification photographs of mothers/female caretakers and female bank tellers and security guards at all cash

distribution sites. As a result, in 2017, half of the 32,070 cash recipients were female, a major step forward.

64. An important aspect of gender-responsive social inclusion is the provision of social benefits and protections, such as childcare and parenting support, as well as maternity and paternity leave. In Malaysia, sustained policy advocacy and public awareness-raising in 2017 resulted in the adoption of a new policy that provides extended maternity leave, workplace breastfeeding breaks, tax incentives for women returning to the workforce and childcare facilities in government offices. The year also saw the launch of the global Super Dads campaign by UNICEF and its partners, which promotes positive parenting and encourages fathers to play an active role in their children's development.

65. Overall, efforts to mainstream gender across programming were uneven, especially in the early years of the Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017 implementation, when UNICEF staff were not always clear on the meaning of mainstreaming and how to sufficiently integrate gender. This challenge was evident in both implementation and reporting on results. With increasing technical support from headquarters and regional- and country-based gender staff, UNICEF addressed these challenges to some extent in 2016 and 2017 and offered better gender analysis and clearer articulation and implementation of programmatic gender results. This ongoing effort requires considerable capacity strengthening, as many country offices still lack adequate technical gender expertise for designing and implementing programmes. The Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021 prioritizes these challenges, building on the clearer articulation of gender results in the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 results and resources matrix and the accelerated deployment of tools, guidance and capacity-building to improve gender analysis and results tracking.

III. Institutional strengthening

66. The Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017 used five benchmarks against which improvements in institutional capacity and systems to support gender-equality results were tracked. In the past four years, efforts to strengthen systems and build capacity moved most of the benchmarks in a positive direction.

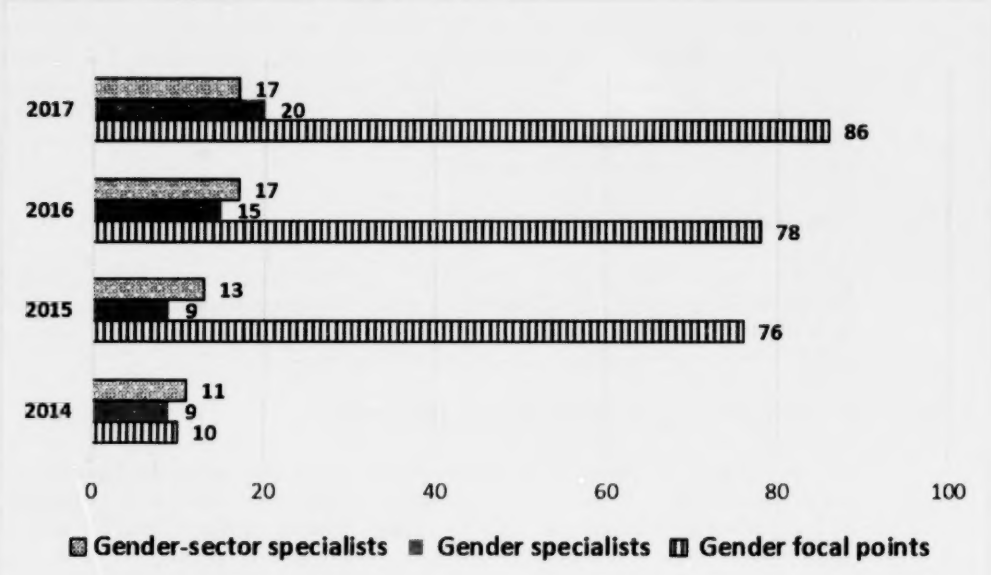
A. Programme expenditure on gender results

67. In line with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UNICEF had set a financial benchmark of 15 per cent of programme expenditure by 2017 to advance gender equality. UNICEF sets an exceptionally high standard for programme expenditure to qualify as "advancing gender equality", since both outputs and activities must be gender-relevant or transformative. Good progress was made against this benchmark in the period 2014–2017, even though the target was not met. Expenditures on programming to advance gender equality rose from 8.3 per cent in 2013 to 10.7 per cent in 2017, a significant increase and sign of concerted efforts to improve both the deployment of organizational resources for gender equality and the tracking of expenditures under the Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017. Further improvements in the expenditure coding system to match the Strategic Plan and the Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021, including activity-level gender tags, should result in the better capture of programmatic and expenditure shifts.

B. Gender staffing and capacity

68. UNICEF has made good progress in the supply and quality of technical gender expertise. The most prominent achievement has been a solid infrastructure of senior-level gender expertise at headquarters and regional levels. The target of 14 senior gender experts was exceeded, with the placement of 15 senior staff at headquarters and the seven regional offices by 2016, and the subsequent increase to 16 in 2017. This consolidation in gender architecture has been a critical catalyst in driving gender in UNICEF programming overall. The number of dedicated gender specialists at the country level rose from 9 in 2014 to 20 in 2017, but fell short of the target of 50 (see figure III). A positive compensating effort, however, was the increase in the number of gender-sector specialists in country offices, up from 11 in 2014 to 17 in 2017. Another important area of progress was the establishment of gender focal points in 86 country offices, compared with only 10 in 2014, and more systematic work by regional gender advisers to help country offices build not only their own but also their partners' capacity on gender programming and results through regular trainings and technical support missions.

Figure III
Gender staff covering country offices, 2014–2017



69. Concurrent with the increase in the number of gender specialists, gender capacity received a boost with the 2017 launch of the GenderPro initiative to build capacity and professionalization for gender focal points, sectoral/thematic leads and specialists. A pilot cohort of 24 UNICEF gender focal points has already received training. GenderPro complements the hands-on capacity development provided by regional gender advisers and will be extended to UNICEF partners and counterparts.

70. UNICEF has also been making good, if uneven, progress on gender parity among senior staff and management. In 2017, 50 per cent of Deputy Executive Directors were female, and six of seven Regional Directors were female. The proportion of women

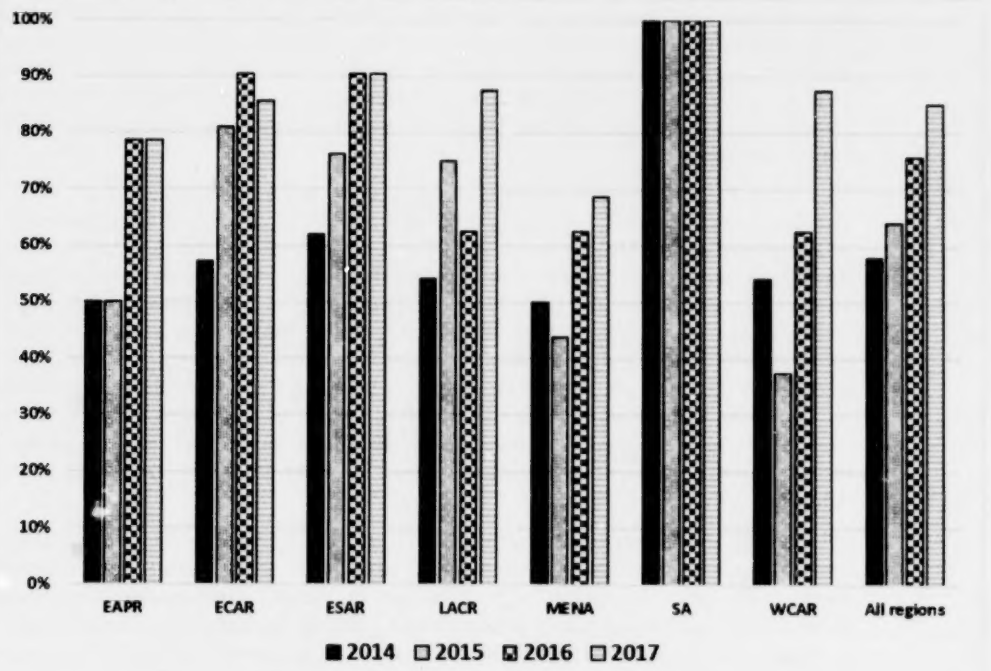
also rose at the D2 and D1 levels, from 43 per cent in 2016 to 46 per cent in 2017. Unfortunately, this rise was accompanied by a decrease in gender parity gains at the P5 level, with 44 per cent of positions held by women in 2017 compared with 46 per cent in 2016. This setback suggests the need to more carefully manage the growth and replenishment of female talent in P4- and P5-level posts, as women move into more senior-level positions. In 2017, UNICEF underwent a gender-equality review for Economic Dividends for Gender Equality Certification, the leading global business certification standard for gender equality in the workplace.

C. Gender performance of country programme management plans

71. During the period 2014–2017, country offices made significant progress in incorporating gender results into their country programme management plans. Eighty-five per cent of plans now outline specific country office accountabilities for gender results and implementation of the Gender Action Plan, compared with only 58 per cent in 2014; all regions have reported a positive trend (see figure IV). These improvements have resulted from better quality assurance and technical support by regional gender advisers and the systematic roll out of a programmatic gender review tool to support the integration of gender results during the country programme development process.

Figure IV

Percentage of country programme management plans specifying accountability for Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017 results, by region



Abbreviations: EAPR: East Asia and the Pacific; ECAR: Europe and Central Asia; ESAR: Eastern and Southern Africa; LACR: Latin America and Caribbean; MENA: Middle East and Northern Africa; SA: South Asia; WCAR: West and Central Africa.

D. Gender performance on evaluations of UNICEF programmes

72. According to the UNICEF Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System, the percentage of evaluations rated "satisfactory" and "highly satisfactory" in incorporating gender rose from 33 per cent in 2015 to 66 per cent in 2016. Preliminary figures for evaluation reports submitted in 2017 indicate that 71 per cent are rated "satisfactory" or better.

E. Effective knowledge-sharing, communications and partnerships

73. In 2017, UNICEF scaled up and systemized online platforms and activities for the internal sharing of gender-related knowledge and learning. Webinar series, which drew over 430 staff globally, engaged UNICEF personnel on substantive and technical issues related to the Gender Action Plan. An online community of practice on gender equality now has over 500 active users.

74. UNICEF continued to disseminate important information on gender equality for external stakeholders and partners through its publications, website, links to partner websites and frequent social media posts. The organization regularly amplifies country-office content and messaging on its global channels. Short videos shared on social media have been received especially well, such as those on child marriage produced in 2017 in Bangladesh and Kenya.

75. Major public campaigns and events continued to generate substantial visibility and knowledge on gender issues. UNICEF collaborated with United Nations entities and civil society organizations to mark the International Day of the Girl in October 2017 with a flagship event at headquarters and the video #FreedomforGirls, viewed over 2.5 million times online. The End Violence Against Children report, released in November 2017, spotlighted the impact of sexual violence on children, especially adolescent girls.

76. UNICEF efforts to strengthen its partnerships and participation in task forces, steering committees and working groups underscore its commitment to collaboration in addressing gender inequalities. UNICEF is a member of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality and the United Nations Task Force on Violence Against Women. UNICEF has observer status on the steering Committee of the United Nations-European Union-led Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls. UNICEF is also a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action and a lead agency in the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict network. Key civil society and research partners include Girls not Brides, Plan International, Together for Girls and Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.

77. During the Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017 implementation period, UNICEF made progress against institutional benchmarks, without, however, fully meeting them. Still, the significant improvements in gender architecture, increased expenditures and the expansion of knowledge, learning and capacity provided a solid foundation for acceleration and further investment in the period 2018–2021, strongly positioning UNICEF to deliver on its goals. The Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021 places especially strong emphasis on expanding gender expertise at the country level, increasing the demand and supply of gender-related data and analysis, documenting

and sharing best practices and field-based models of programmatic excellence and boosting resource allocation and use for gender equality.

IV. Lessons learned and the way forward

78. In the past four years, there have been substantial programmatic and institutional achievements in promoting gender equality, laying the groundwork for UNICEF to accelerate progress in the period 2018–2021. The organization significantly strengthened gender staffing and the capacity for gender programming, and treated gender equality as a cross-cutting priority crucial to achieving results across sectors. It bolstered institutional systems and resources to improve implementation and to measure what works in order to advance gender equality. Indeed, the Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017 demonstrated that progress is possible within four years through the clear articulation and prioritization of programmatic gender results, the commitment of leadership and the investment of resources.

79. Gender results feature prominently in the five Goal Areas of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, including a flagship result on non-gender-discriminatory roles and practices in Goal Area 5. Moving forward, UNICEF will build on lessons learned, continue progress where there has been success, address remaining challenges and redouble efforts to accelerate and scale up quality gender programming, intensify gender integration, strengthen data and analysis and bolster resource allocation.

80. The four targeted priorities on adolescent girls brought attention to the interlinked forms of gender inequality they face and helped UNICEF and its partners to catalyse global and local investment and action — and substantial results — on such issues as child marriage and adolescent maternal care. Targeted priorities also deepened the country-level analysis and ownership of adolescent-focused gender results, essential for scaling up locally owned solutions. A leap forward will require even greater reinforcement of national investments in adolescent girls, new and innovative solutions and expanded partnerships.

81. The application of gender mainstreaming within programming has been slower to evolve at UNICEF compared with efforts around targeted priorities for adolescent girls. Still, promising areas of focus for the period 2018–2021 have begun to solidify and include: quality maternal care; the role and needs of women in WASH interventions; gender and the community health workforce; the gender dimensions of civil registration and vital statistics systems; and mothers' and female caretakers' access to poverty-reduction and social protection mechanisms. These issues have been formalized as results in the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and the Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021.

82. Within UNICEF, putting in place additional technical gender expertise has enabled much stronger technical and strategic coordination, greatly improving the quality and scope of gender programming and measurement, building gender capacity and enhancing gender networks and partnerships. Technical expertise for gender programming at the country level and within sectors increased at a slower pace, and is a high priority under the Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021, especially with the further roll-out of the GenderPro initiative. UNICEF aims to chart a rigorous path on gender capacity-building for itself and its partners and for programme countries more broadly by focusing on applied gender programming, including high-quality gender analysis and measurement.

83. Finally, UNICEF must acknowledge the critical collaborations and partnerships it developed over the past four years and continues to maintain with a variety of United Nations, government, civil society and private sector partners. Leveraging such networks and the synergies of joint action and expertise will continue to be a cornerstone of the programmatic efforts of UNICEF to promote quality gender programming at scale over the next four years.

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Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2017

Summary

The present report is submitted to the UNICEF Executive Board in accordance with section 5.4 of the Secretary-General's bulletin on United Nations system-wide application of ethics: separately administered organs and programmes (ST/SGB/2007/11). The report was reviewed and recommendations were provided by the Ethics Panel of the United Nations, as envisaged in the bulletin.

The annual report covers each of the mandated areas of work for the Office: (a) standard-setting and policy support; (b) training, education and outreach; (c) advice and guidance; (d) the Financial Disclosure Programme; (e) the protection of staff against retaliation; and (f) participation in the Ethics Panel of the United Nations and the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/12, the report also presents observations/recommendations to management to strengthen the organizational culture of integrity and compliance. The report covers activities relating to UNICEF staff and services provided to them as well as to consultants and other non-staff, to the extent applicable.

* E/ICEF/2018/8.
Note: The present document was processed in its entirety by UNICEF.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report, the ninth since the establishment of the UNICEF Ethics Office in December 2007, covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2017. The report, prepared in accordance with the Secretary-General's bulletin on United Nations system-wide application of ethics: separately administered organs and programmes (ST/SGB/2007/11), is submitted to the Executive Board at its 2018 annual session.

II. Overview and general information on activities of the Ethics Office

2. As in previous years, the activities of the Ethics Office were undertaken in the following mandated areas of work:

(a) Provide guidance and policy support to management on ethics standard-setting by reviewing and advising on the rules, policies, procedures and practices of the organization in order to reinforce and promote the highest standards of ethics and integrity as required by the Charter of the United Nations, other applicable staff rules and regulations, the directives of UNICEF and the Standards of conduct for the international civil service;

(b) Raise the awareness of staff regarding the values and expected standards of conduct and procedures of the United Nations, through training and other forms of outreach;

(c) Provide confidential advice and guidance to staff and management, at their request, on ethical issues;

(d) Administer the Financial Disclosure Programme;

(e) Undertake assigned responsibilities under the policy on protection against retaliation;

(f) Contribute to harmonized approaches to ethics issues within the United Nations system.

3. The Ethics Office recorded and responded to 634 requests for services in 2017, compared with 321 requests in 2016 and 323 in 2015. In other words, the number of recorded requests for services in 2017 almost doubled, compared with the number of recorded requests for services in the previous two years. This very significant increase in the number of recorded requests for services can be attributed to two main factors:

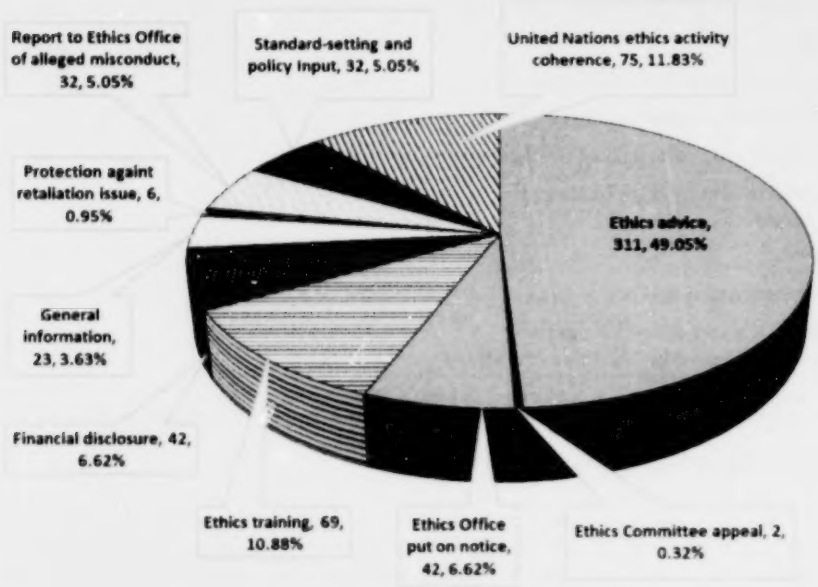
(a) The Ethics Office undertook considerable and sustained efforts in 2016 and 2017 to increase its visibility and accessibility to all UNICEF staff worldwide. In 2017, the Office engaged in numerous high-profile outreach and awareness initiatives and completed a comprehensive redesign of its UNICEF intranet presence (creation of the Office and Ethics Dialogue Facilitators' team sites);

(b) The Ethics Office also made considerable efforts in 2017 to achieve a more systematic and streamlined recording of requests for services. At the present stage, the Office is preparing a business case for acquiring comprehensive user-friendly case-management software in 2018;

4. Of the recorded requests for services in 2017, 49 per cent were requests for confidential ethics advice and guidance (area 2 (c)); 11 per cent were requests for ethics training (area 2 (b)); 12 per cent were related to the coherence and harmonization of United Nations ethics

activity (area 2 (f)); and 5 per cent were related to providing guidance and policy support on ethics standard-setting (area 2 (a)).

Figure I
Number of requests for Ethics Office services, by category, 2017


Report to Ethics Office of alleged misconduct, 32, 5.05%
Standard-setting and policy input, 32, 5.05%
United Nations ethics activity coherence, 75, 11.83%
Protection againt retaliation issue, 6, 0.95%
Ethics advice, 311, 49.05%
General information, 23, 3.63%
Financial disclosure, 42, 6.62%
Ethics training, 69, 10.88%
Ethics Office put on notice, 42, 6.62%
Ethics Committee appeal, 2, 0.32%

5. In line with the Ethics Office work plan for 2016/2017, the key focus for its 2017 activities continued to be on further enhancing its ethics outreach, awareness, training and education initiatives, with a particular emphasis on ethical leadership. As further explained below, the Office continued to try out and design new models for outreach and interaction to reach as many UNICEF staff members and non-staff personnel as possible.

6. Throughout 2017, the Office continued to work closely with offices across UNICEF to achieve seamless and cohesive support to and services for staff members seeking advice on workplace and other staff conduct-related matters. Collaboration was particularly close with the Division of Human Resources, the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI), the Office of the Ombudsman for the Funds and Programmes, the Staff Counsellors, and the Information and Communication Technology Division as well as the Global Staff Association at the global and regional levels. The Ethics Office also worked closely with the regional offices and country offices. In addition, the Principal Adviser, Ethics, met regularly with the Executive Director and the Chief of Staff.

Table 1
Comparison of the number of requests for ethics-related services, by category, 2015–2017

Category	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Ethics advice[1]	153	141	311
Ethics Panel protection against retaliation appeal matters[2]	0	2	2
Ethics Office put on notice[3]	8	10	42
Ethics training	37	66	69
Financial Disclosure Programme	36	17	42
General information requests by staff	13	11	23
UNICEF protection against retaliation	12	5	6
Report to Ethics Office of alleged misconduct	27	5	32
Press	0	2	0
Standard-setting and policy input	20	28	32
United Nations ethics coherence (consultations within the Ethics Panel)	17	34	75
Total	**323**	**321**	**634**

III. Training, education and outreach

7. The Ethics Office continued its strong focus in 2017 on further enhancing its ethics outreach, awareness, training and education initiatives, with a particular emphasis on ethical leadership. The overall goal was to further raise awareness and understanding of the applicable United Nations staff regulations and rules and UNICEF rules and standards of conduct as well as the mandate of the Office. In 2017, the Office further stepped up its efforts to reach and engage with UNICEF leadership and staff members at all levels.

8. As a key element of its 2017 global outreach activities, the Ethics Office organized, coordinated and led an organization-wide initiative branded as "Ethics Leadership Month". The initiative took place throughout October 2017, with the key event being Global Ethics Day, held on 18 October. The idea was to bring together the various strands in which ethics is being discussed in UNICEF, to demonstrate that UNICEF offices and divisions

[1] The Ethics Office counts as a request for ethics advice any individual request for advice and guidance by one staff member or non-staff personnel, in relation to a set of facts. In many instances, one request for ethics advice may require multiple communications by email and/or conversations. In other instances, one request for advice requires a single exchange.

[2] This refers to consultations by the Chair of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations with members of the panel, in relation to the function of the Chair as the reviewer of determinations in cases of protection against retaliation. In essence, the members of the panel exercise a peer-review function in relation to cases that are determined by another member. Such review is triggered upon request by a complainant (staff member or non-staff personnel).

[3] This category refers to situations in which the Ethics Office is notified of a particular situation by a staff member or non-staff personnel, but the individual specifically requests the Office not to take any action.

worldwide are joined in their efforts to promote ethics-related topics and issues, even if there is no single office with the exclusive mandate to cover all of them.

9. While the Ethics Office took the lead in organizing Ethics Leadership Month, 13 offices and divisions in UNICEF showcased their work on specific ethics-related issues and 14 global webinars or other globally recorded sessions on ethics-related topics were held. The global webinars covered a comprehensive range of topics, including (a) ethics and private lives (focused on the treatment of staff members' children, other family members, spouses, partners and household employees); (b) ethical dilemmas and access to information on ethics for supply; (c) ethics and information technology (focused on digital ethics and what it means for children and UNICEF); (d) ethics in evidence gathering; (e) ethics in fundraising and corporate social responsibility; (f) ethics in innovation: UNICEF principles for innovation and technology development; and (g) ethics in communication: the ethical use by UNICEF of children's images and the organization's social media guidelines.

10. Ethics Leadership Month was thus developed as a grassroots effort, at all levels and in all parts of the organization, with events organized at the country-office, regional-office and division levels. Globally, at least 2,800 staff members — over 20 per cent of all staff members — participated in some form of ethics training or outreach activity during the month, with 67 country offices and 10 other offices and divisions organizing specific activities. Staff members in 47 country offices retook the Oath of Office, as a powerful symbolic act to mark their commitment and continued dedication to the key values of UNICEF.

11. In addition to this high-profile, high-visibility initiative, the Ethics Office continued with established training and outreach methods, while further diversifying the methods and tools it used for training, education and outreach. UNICEF continued to offer the online course entitled "Ethics and Integrity at UNICEF", which was adapted from the e-learning course of the Secretariat and introduced in June 2015. The course, which is available in English, French and Spanish, is mandatory for current staff and is included in the induction package for new staff.

12. In 2017, the Ethics Office collaborated with the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to finalize the mandatory online training on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. UNICEF was the first of the four to launch the course, with a joint global broadcast message from the Director of Human Resources and the Principal Adviser, Ethics, in August 2017. The launch was promoted by means of a video of a conversation between the Deputy Executive Director (Management) and the Principal Adviser, Ethics, in which they shared their thoughts about the new training course. The course is currently available only in English, but is expected to be available in Arabic, French and Spanish before mid-2018.

13. In 2017, the Ethics Office received a total of 69 requests for ethics training and awareness sessions or training support. Those requests originated in 16 country offices, six regional offices and seven headquarters offices or divisions. The Office provided ethics training to a total of 2,461 staff members, with 947 participating in face-to-face sessions and 1,514 in remote sessions. Of the 947 staff members who participated in face-to-face sessions, 578 were based in country offices, 143 were members of regional or global management teams and 10 were representatives of the Global Staff Association.

14. Since taking office in February 2016, the Principal Adviser, Ethics, has attended Regional Management Team meetings in East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern and Southern Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia and West and Central Africa,

connecting face-to-face with regional directors and country office representatives in five out of the seven UNICEF regions. The Principal Adviser also used the official missions for face-to-face ethics training and awareness sessions in the host country and in neighbouring country offices in the regions, including face-to-face sessions in Afghanistan, India, Libya, Morocco, the Philippines and Tunisia. In addition, following urgent requests by the representatives of Chad and Rwanda, respectively, one of the two Ethics specialists (a native French speaker) undertook a two-week mission to the country offices in those countries to provide face-to-face ethics training and awareness sessions.

15. In New York, the Principal Adviser, Ethics, held a session for the annual general meeting of the Global Staff Association and an induction course for new representatives. The Ethics Office also held four in-person and one remote ethics session for new staff at headquarters locations. In addition, the Office held two joint face-to-face training sessions with the Ombudsman for the Funds and Programmes New York-based staff. The Office also held 39 remote ethics training sessions via Skype or video-conference customized to the needs of the recipients.

16. The Ethics Office organized and led five global webinars that were accessible to staff worldwide on the following ethics related topics: (a) political activities by staff members and the status of international civil servants; (b) outside activities; (c) preventing, detecting and combatting fraud and corruption; (d) relations with national Governments and the independence of the international civil service (conducted in French); and (e) ethics and private lives. The webinars attracted up to 171 participants per session globally and 665 participants in total. In light of the ongoing success of this outreach activity in 2016/2017, the Office plans to continue to offer such webinars in 2018.

17. The Ethics Office continued the global roll-out of the Ethics Dialogue Facilitator model, introduced in 2014/2015 and based on the "train the trainer" model. The role of the Ethics Dialogue Facilitators is to raise understanding and awareness of ethics and integrity issues in relation to staff conduct, by holding regular (at least quarterly) meetings for all staff members in a particular country office, and to facilitate a conversation around a particular ethics topic, using case studies and presentations accessible to all trained Ethics Dialogue Facilitators. Through a combination of remote and face-to-face training, the Office trained 65 new facilitators. As a result, by the end of 2017, 17 out of 21 country offices in Eastern and Southern Africa; all countries in the Middle East and North Africa; and half of the countries in East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia had one or more facilitators in place. The Office also responded to requests to recommend, guide and debrief external ethics trainers, in particular for country offices in which the provision of face-to-face ethics training by Office staff was not viable due to capacity reasons.

18. Compared with 2016, the number of staff members who received customized, face-to-face ethics training by the Ethics Office in 2017 increased by 29 per cent and the number of staff members who received such training remotely increased by 81 per cent. Overall, the number of staff members who received customized ethics training (beyond the mandatory online courses), either remotely or in person, increased by almost 57 per cent.

19. Finally, the Ethics Office retained two Columbia University graduate students from UNICEF programme countries in Asia and East Africa as ethics communications interns to assist in identifying and using new communications tools to reach as wide a range of staff members as possible, with a focus on national staff, colleagues from programme countries and younger colleagues from the millennial generation. In that spirit, the Ethics Office started and nurtured two Yammer groups (the UNICEF internal equivalent to Twitter) on ethics-related topics and took advice from Yammer participants on how to effectively

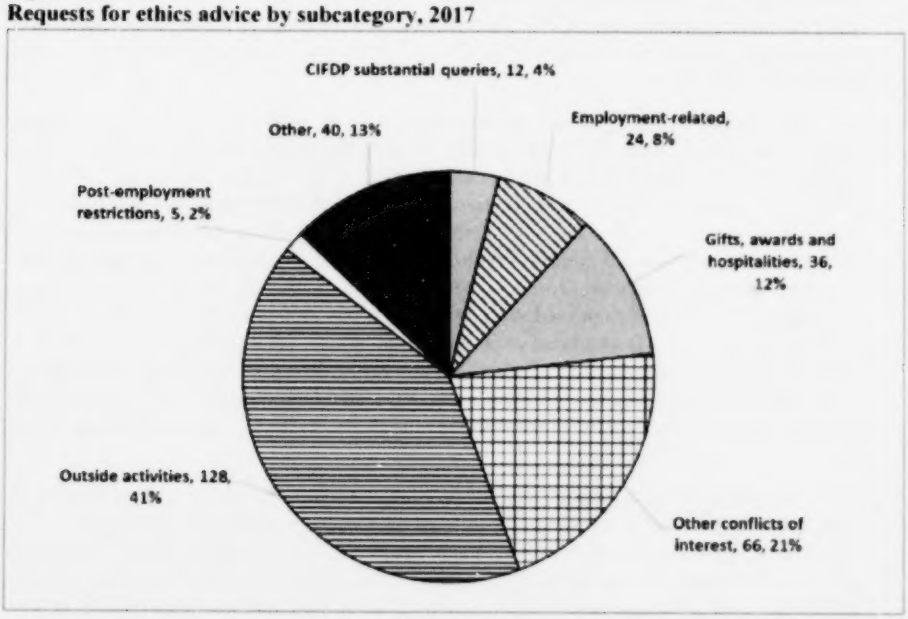
deliver sometimes "tough messages" by using human interest-focused imaging and messaging.

IV. Advice and guidance

20. The Ethics Office recorded 311 individual requests for ethics advice in 2017, compared with 141 in 2016 and 153 in 2015. As shown in figure II, 41 per cent were related to the outside activities of staff members and 21 per cent to other conflicts of interest. While the majority of requests came from individual staff members, some came from managers seeking advice on requests from staff members wanting to engage in outside activities. A significant number of requests concerning outside activities continued to come to the Office as consultation matters from the Policy and Administrative Law Section in the Division of Human Resources. Within the category of requests concerning outside activities and conflicts of interest, the Office noted a significant increase in requests for advice on permissible outside activities after conducting the webinar on outside activities, including political activities.

21. Throughout 2017, starting in January, the Ethics Office registered a significant increase in requests for advice and guidance on the scope of permissible political activities for staff members, in light of their status as international civil servants, in particular the ability of staff members to participate in such public events as marches. Following consultations and conversations with internal stakeholders and other members of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations, the Ethics Office decided to address the topic individually by responding to specific requests for advice and guidance, and globally through a tailor-made webinar and a list of frequently asked questions made available on the Ethics Office website in early 2017.

Figure II
Requests for ethics advice by subcategory, 2017


CIFDP substantial queries, 12, 4%
Employment-related, 24, 8%
Other, 40, 13%
Post-employment restrictions, 5, 2%
Gifts, awards and hospitalities, 36, 12%
Outside activities, 128, 41%
Other conflicts of interest, 66, 21%

Abbreviation: CIFDP – Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme.

V. Standard-setting and policy support

22. Under the Secretary-General's bulletin on United Nations system-wide application of ethics: separately administered organs and programmes (ST/SGB/2007/11), the Ethics Office provides guidance and policy support to management on ethics standard-setting by reviewing and advising on the rules, policies, procedures and practices of the organization in order to reinforce and promote the highest standards of ethics and integrity.

23. To assist the Ethics Office in meeting this mandate, the Office held regular collaborative meetings with the Policy and Administrative Law Section in the Division of Human Resources, the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI), the Staff Counsellors and the Office of the Ombudsman.

24. During the reporting period, the Ethics Office was consulted and provided advice on policy development projects. Notably, the Office was consulted by the Division of Financial and Administrative Management on the terms of reference for the retaining of an external consultancy firm to develop the UNICEF anti-fraud strategy. It is the understanding of the Office that it will eventually also be consulted on the draft anti-fraud strategy itself before it is finalized. Furthermore, the Office provided input for the design of the 2017 Global Staff Survey, which was launched in March 2017, on questions relating to ethics, integrity and standards of conduct.

25. In addition, the Office was consulted by the Joint Inspection Unit for input into its reports on conflict of interest and whistle-blower protection.

26. The Ethics Office was consulted on developments within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee regarding protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and on the statement by the Committee's principals regarding zero tolerance on sexual harassment and abuse in the humanitarian sector, issued in March 2017. The latter topic started to receive additional attention among relevant UNICEF stakeholders during the fourth quarter of 2017. The topic of sexual harassment and abuse in the humanitarian sector was also an important part of the conversations among the Ethics Advisers for the funds and programmes within the Ethics Panel of the United Nations.

27. The Ethics Office continued to advocate internally within UNICEF for the further operationalization of the UNICEF Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children (Child Safeguarding Policy), which was adopted in mid-2016. The Office was informed that several activities to operationalize the policy had taken place or were taking place, in particular: (a) the general policy standards have been incorporated by reference into all UNICEF contracts with staff, independent consultants and contractors, suppliers and civil society implementing partners; (b) measures are being taken to mitigate personnel risks through improved staff vetting and the launch of the mandatory online training on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse; (c) a number of policies have been identified that are needed to address child safeguarding concerns and existing policy gaps; and (d) a decision has been taken to have standing capacity for a senior child safeguarding advisor, initially supported with additional staffing to accelerate work in the area.

28. The Ethics Office continues to be of the view, however, that the operationalization of the Child Safeguarding Policy remains unfinished, since the policy specifically envisages that UNICEF division directors will issue appropriate procedures and guidelines, within the scope of their respective accountabilities regarding the implementation of the policy. While the Office does not know how many divisions have already met this requirement, it was

encouraged by the fact that UNICEF recognizes that additional procedures and further guidance are required for the implementation of the policy; existing policies should be harmonized; and a review and risk assessment are required to ensure that consistent, interlocking and comprehensive standards are implemented. Policy coherence is particularly important (and challenging), since safeguarding concerns arise in all aspects of the work of UNICEF.

29. Work on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse has gained momentum since the publication of the report of an independent review on sexual exploitation and abuse by international peacekeeping forces in the Central African Republic: "Taking action on sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers" (A/71/99). In addition, the Child Protection Division led several initiatives, including on a community-based complaint mechanism and on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse networks. The Ethics Office was encouraged by the fact that, towards the end of 2017, UNICEF started to further accelerate its response to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. As a part of these activities, an interim post focused on sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and child safeguarding was created, reporting directly to the Deputy Executive Director (Management).

30. As part of its ethics standard-setting and policy-support functions, the Ethics Office provided a briefing on its programme activities at the annual meeting of the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee.

31. In the absence of an established standard practice regarding when, how and in what format the Ethics Office should be consulted on matters of ethics standard-setting and policy support, the Office continued to advocate for its early and ongoing involvement in all and any such matters to ensure that input from the Office has the organizational impact envisaged in its mandate.

VI. Financial Disclosure Programme

32. The Ethics Office continued to manage and administer the UNICEF Financial Disclosure Programme – referred to in internal communications with staff members as the Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme (CIFDP). The programme, which reached its tenth year of operation in 2017, was designed to protect UNICEF against conflicts of interest and various organizational risks relating to the outside activities and financial engagements of staff members. The CIFDP typically consists of the following process steps: (a) registration of participating staff members; (b) filing by participating staff members; (c) review by the Office; (d) verification by the Office; and (e) issuance of guidance notes by the Office.

33. In accordance with the Executive Directive on Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interest Statements (CF/EXD/2012-003), all staff members at the D-1 level and above and any staff member whose responsibilities are identified in the Financial Disclosure Policy of UNICEF are required to file a Financial Disclosure Statement. In addition to preselected staff members who are required to file due to their level or functional title, additional staff members are selected jointly, in accordance with the policy, by the Ethics Office and the head of the relevant office or division, during the annual filer registration process. The Ethics Office relies upon the individual offices and divisions for the selection of additional staff members on the basis of the registration guidelines issued by the Ethics Office.

34. In preparation for the 2017 CIFDP launch, the Ethics Office held four global webinars to reach out to representatives and chiefs of operations globally, with the aim of achieving

a better understanding of the function of the CIFDP and what risks it can and cannot mitigate. The Ethics Office also issued updated guidelines under the Executive Directive. An important additional aim of both the CIFDP webinars and the updated guidelines was to (a) lower the overall number of registered filers – which at more than 20 per cent of staff members was traditionally very high in UNICEF, compared with the Secretariat and other funds and programmes; and (b) refocus the composition of the filer population on senior-level staff, in which there is typically a higher conflict-of-interest risk. The rationale was that a lower number of filers would enable the Office to conduct more-in-depth reviews and issue more individualized guidance notes. According to the 2017 statistics, the refocusing exercise was successful, with the overall number of filers reduced from over 2,500 to just over 2,000. In addition, compliance rates were higher and were achieved significantly faster, and the goal of refocusing the CIFDP exercise on more senior level staff was also successfully achieved.

Table 2
Compliance with the Financial Disclosure Programme, 2007–2017

Year	*Number of staff required to file*	*Compliance (percentage)*
2007	2 545	82.8
2008	2 556	83.8
2009	2 536	100.0
2010	2 365	99.6
2011	2 592	99.7
2012	2 694	99.9
2013	2 498	100.0
2014	2 594	100.0
2015	2 549	98.9
2016	2 524	99.3
2017	2 067	99.9

35. A total of 2,061 staff members were reviewed as part of the 2017 CIFDP exercise, covering the reporting year ending 31 December 2016. Director-level staff comprised 6.4 per cent of the total number of reviews (up from 4.8 per cent in 2016), staff members in the international professional category 53.6 per cent (up from 47.2 per cent in 2016), staff in the national professional category 22 per cent (down from 23 per cent in 2016) and staff in the general service category 18 per cent (down from 25 per cent in 2016).

36. An analysis of the reviews shows that 7.6 per cent of staff participating in the 2017 CIFDP, compared with 11.8 per cent in 2016, had nothing to declare. This means that they answered "no" to all questions, i.e., they neither had assets at the threshold level nor any situation that could amount even to a potential conflict of interest that would need to be reviewed and considered by the Ethics Office. The decline can be seen as evidence that the refocusing exercise was successful, in that it allowed the Ethics Office to focus more on filers for whom closer review and consideration was required. A total of 89.2 per cent of staff participating in the 2017 CIFDP either indicated that they had no conflict of interest or declared personal circumstances in which there was some remote connection to the United Nations or UNICEF that did not currently amount to an actual or potential conflict of interest; and 2.5 per cent of staff had a potential conflict of interest. A total of 0.7 per cent

of participating staff had recognized their own conflict of interest and had already taken proactive steps to mitigate it.

37. Among staff selected to participate in the 2017 CIFDP exercise, 3.8 per cent had spouses who worked for UNICEF and 11.7 per cent had spouses who worked for other United Nations agencies or UNICEF-related entities, such as partners, non-governmental organizations or vendors. In addition, 16.9 per cent of participating staff had relatives who worked for UNICEF, other United Nations agencies or UNICEF-related entities.

38. Another source of potential conflict of interest is related to the outside activities of staff members. Among staff selected to participate in the 2017 CIFDP exercise, 5 per cent were involved in such activities or had leadership roles with non-United Nations entities during the reporting period. A continued area of concern for the Ethics Office is the fact that in some instances staff members who, according to their disclosures in the 2017 CIFDP exercise, were engaged in outside activities, had not sought or received the prior approval called for in Executive Directive CF/EXD/2012-009. In these instances, the Office issued specific guidance notes and, where appropriate, informed the relevant head of office.

39. Verification — an exercise in which a randomly selected sample of staff members are asked to provide supporting documents for the Financial Disclosure Statements that they have filed — is typically an important part of the Financial Disclosure Programme. While the Ethics Office conducted four disclosure verification exercises between 2013 and 2016, it was not possible to complete a verification exercise in 2017, since the Office encountered significant personnel challenges, resulting in the need to recruit an outside consultant at short notice in October 2017 to complete the 2017 review exercise before the end of the calendar year. Since then, the staffing situation in the Ethics Office has stabilized so that it is expected that verifications will resume in 2018.

VII. Protection of staff against retaliation and outcome of the 2017 Global Staff Survey

40. During the reporting period, there were two formal requests for protection under the UNICEF whistle-blower protection policy and an additional four inquiries that did not proceed to requests for protection. The Ethics Office, on the basis of an initial examination, determined that in one of the two formal requests a prima facie case of retaliation had been made and referred that case to the OIAI for a full investigation. The outcome of the investigation was shared with the Office, which subsequently requested further clarifications from OIAI.

41. In March 2017, the Division of Human Resources organized and administered the 2017 Global Staff Survey. It contained a total of five questions on standards of conduct.[4] The global average of positive responses to these questions was 67 per cent, representing a

[4] Question 42: "I understand and know what is expected of me under the Standards of conduct of the international civil service, the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules on rights and obligations of staff, as well as other relevant policies." (94 per cent positive response); question 46: "My management team acts with honesty and integrity" (71 per cent positive); question 45: "In my office, people at all levels are held accountable for ethical behavior" (65 per cent positive); question 43: "At UNICEF, the working mechanisms to resolve questions of misconduct are applied fairly" (55 per cent positive); question 44: "I believe that if I report misconduct through appropriate channels within UNICEF, I would be protected from retaliation" (51 per cent positive).

5 per cent improvement compared with the survey conducted in 2014 and a 10 per cent improvement compared with that conducted in 2011.

42. However, there was significant variation among the answers to the different questions: the responses indicated that staff members felt confident that they knew what the applicable rules said (although, at 94 per cent positive, they might have been overly confident, based on the Principal Adviser's training experiences since her arrival in February 2016). But staff members were much less confident that the rules were applied in the same way to all staff, that everyone would be held accountable for complying with the rules in the same way and that they were safe when reporting misconduct.

43. The 2017 Global Staff Survey outcome on standards of conduct questions seemed to confirm the informal feedback that the Principal Adviser, Ethics, had received in numerous in-person interactions since February 2016, namely, that there continued to be significant concerns among staff members regarding the three tenets identified in the 2015 annual report as necessary for a speak-up culture: (a) a staff member can speak up without fear of retaliation or other negative consequences; (b) speaking up is not futile; and (c) working mechanisms to resolve questions of misconduct or other disputes are applied fairly. The Ethics Office was encouraged, however, by the fact that throughout 2017, particularly in the latter part of the year, following Ethics Leadership Month, more staff members approached the Office with questions concerning the reporting of misconduct, including sexual harassment.

44. The Global Staff Association, following the outcome of the 2017 Global Staff Survey, decided to relaunch a speak-up culture campaign under the tag line of "Voice". The Ethics Office is looking forward to working closely with the Global Staff Association in that respect. The Principal Adviser, Ethics, also committed to being a sounding board for a group of senior managers who will lead the management response to the 2017 Global Staff Survey on the overall topic of accountability. This commitment was based on the tenet that a speak-up culture crucially required equal accountability at all levels: staff will speak up when they believe that senior management listens and will take action. The Office is committed to continuing its work with other stakeholders throughout the organization, in particular the Division of Human Resources, OIAI, the Staff Counsellors, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Global Staff Association, as well as those at the regional- and country-office levels, to increase staff trust in the three tenets of a speak-up culture.

VIII. Ethics Panel of the United Nations and the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations

45. In 2017, the Principal Adviser participated in 10 of the 11 meetings of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations, missing one meeting due to official travel. A highlight of the 2017 meetings was a visit during the April meeting by the Secretary-General, who not only expressed his support for and stressed the importance of the Ethics Panel, but also expressed his expectation that it would support his own United Nations reform efforts.

46. As in 2016, the Ethics Panel members frequently consulted one another with a view to harmonizing ethics advice, guidance and practices, in particular on sensitive issues such as the scope of permissible political activities, the promotion of speak-up culture, whistle-blower protection and the independence of the Ethics Offices. While all members of the panel continued to be a great source of peer support for the Principal Adviser, Ethics, she was also able to contribute more actively than the previous year, since it was her second year as a member of the panel and she had established herself as a valued colleague.

47. In the spirit of taking on a more proactive role within the Ethics Panel, the Principal Adviser, Ethics, took on the role, in October 2017, of Alternate Chair for a one-year term. In that capacity, the Principal Adviser is, among other responsibilities, in charge of the independent review of determinations by the United Nations Ethics Office. The review is instigated when the United Nations Ethics Office has determined that there has been no prima facie case of retaliation against a Secretariat staff member, and the staff member decides to request an independent review. In 2017, the Principal Adviser, Ethics, worked on only one such review case, which proved, however, to be extremely complex and difficult to resolve. Further information on the work of the panel is available in the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Ethics Office (A/71/334), presented at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly and covering the period from 1 August 2016 to 31 December 2017.

48. UNICEF also participates in the yearly meeting of the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations. The meeting is an important forum for sharing experience and developing best practices. The 2017 meeting was organized and hosted by the World Food Programme in Rome and focused on working methods for the network itself and best practices for establishing and running an ethics office. In that context, the Principal Adviser prepared for, participated in and presented at a panel discussion on (a) standards of practice and core responsibilities for the ethics function; and (b) principles to evaluate an ethics function. At the July 2017 Ethics Network meeting, the Principal Adviser was elected as its Vice-Chair for a one-year period and thus will have an active role in preparing the 2018 meeting, which will be hosted by the Secretariat in New York.

IX. Follow-up on 2016 observations

49. In light of the outcome of the 2017 Global Staff Survey and the effects of the #MeToo movement on the humanitarian sector, the following observations made in the 2016 annual report of the Ethics Office remain relevant and seem almost prophetic: staff members, in general, show high levels of engagement, they love their jobs and are deeply committed to the mandate of UNICEF. However, to preserve this high level of engagement and good will, UNICEF needs to continue to demonstrate at all levels its strong and unwavering commitment to cultivating and nurturing a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability, and thereby enhancing the trust in and the credibility of the United Nations, both internally and externally. Advocating for an even stronger speak-up culture will be credible and successful only if there is a listening culture, even if it means at times listening to, receiving and accepting what may look like "bad news".

50. The Ethics Office was encouraged by the fact that throughout 2017, particularly in the latter part of the year, following Ethics Leadership Month, as stated above, more staff members approached the Office with questions regarding the reporting of misconduct, including sexual harassment. It was even more encouraging to note that in late 2017, senior managers increasingly started to contact the Office to discuss how a true listening and accountability culture could be promoted.

X. Observations, recommendations and conclusions

51. The following recommendations are informed by and based upon both the experience of the Ethics Office in 2017 and relevant developments during the first quarter of 2018.

52. To further promote a culture change, it is recommended that a definition of ethical competency, based on objective criteria, be developed by the Division of Human Resources

together with the Ethics Office and other stakeholders, and that such ethical competency be included as a criterion in recruitment and promotion decisions as well as in performance appraisals for all staff members. Criteria to be considered could include, for instance, demonstrated (a) high ethical awareness; (b) skill to handle ethical issues; (c) compliance with functional organizational structures and routines; (d) the use of communication and argumentation skills to foster a culture of ethics and integrity; and (e) confidence and emotional strength. The Division of Human Resources supports this recommendation for recruitment and promotion decisions. With respect to performance appraisals, the Division has also expressed support in principle as well as some caution to not overload the process. The Ethics Office understands that the Division also continues to explore multi-rater feedback and expanding 360-degree performance appraisals to a wider range of staff.

53. In light of the significantly increased number of requests for individual advice and guidance, the Ethics Office has requested funds for a professional case management software system, as is already in use within OIAI and is being introduced for the Policy and Administrative Law Section, Division of Human Resources. This request is currently under review by UNICEF senior management, as part of a larger request for additional funding.

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Revised evaluation policy of UNICEF

Summary

The revised evaluation policy of UNICEF has been developed in accordance with Executive Board decision 2018/2. It presents the purpose and rationale for the revision; outlines evaluation principles and procedures; sets out key accountabilities for the function and use of evaluations; describes contributions to system-wide evaluations and national evaluation capacity development; highlights the human and financial resource requirements; and concludes with a note on the implementation, reporting and periodic review of the policy.

Elements of a decision: The Executive Board may wish to (a) welcome the preparation of the revised evaluation policy of UNICEF; and (b) endorse the revised evaluation policy.

* E/ICEF/2018/8.

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I. Purpose, status and scope of the policy

1. The evaluation policy sets out the purpose and use of evaluation in UNICEF, provides definitions, norms and standards and outlines governance arrangements and accountabilities as well as performance standards for the evaluation function. It guides UNICEF staff and partners regarding the organization's requirements for the conduct and use of evaluations. The policy applies to all levels and parts of the organization.

2. The evaluation policy is aligned with the mission of UNICEF as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UNICEF mission statement:[1] to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. At the core of that mission is a culture that uses evaluation for better performance, continuous improvement and strengthened accountability. The evaluation policy promotes and supports the development of that culture.

3. The evaluation policy is also aligned with the Charter of the United Nations[2] and humanitarian principles,[3] with a commitment to human rights and gender equality. It is oriented to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, responding to the call for rigorous evidence, informed by country-led evaluations that are high-quality, accessible, timely and reliable, and the requirements of the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR)[4] and resolution 69/237 in which the General Assembly called for United Nations entities to support efforts to further strengthen national evaluation capacity development.

4. The evaluation policy is guided by the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and international good practices in evaluation, including for the evaluation of humanitarian assistance, such that evaluations are independent, impartial, credible and useful and that evaluation processes are transparent and fully engaged with stakeholders.

II. Rationale for a revised policy

5. Since the endorsement of the 2013 revised evaluation policy of UNICEF,[5] the environment in which the organization operates has changed significantly. The landscape in which evaluations are conducted has been transformed by wide-ranging global accords, including those on sustainable development (2030 Agenda); disaster risk reduction (Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030); climate change (Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change); and financing for development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development). The 2016 QCPR emphasizes the importance of strengthening national evaluation capacities and United Nations joint and system-wide evaluations. Together with efforts to strengthen the delivery of humanitarian action and the reform agenda on repositioning the United Nations development system, the resolutions and accords provide key directions for the scope of and approaches to evaluation going forward.

[1] Available from www.unicef.org/about/who/index_mission.html.
[2] United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, Chapter IX, art. 55 c.
[3] General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 58/114.
[4] Resolution 71/243.
[5] E/ICEF/2013/14.

6. The UNICEF evaluation function is also necessary to help guide the work of UNICEF in the coming years as its strategic plans are rolled out in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially for course corrections.

7. Evaluation norms and standards and related methods and approaches are enhanced on a continual basis to address emerging needs. The revised UNICEF evaluation policy reflects the 2016 updated norms and standards of UNEG[6] and standards for evaluating humanitarian assistance.[7]

8. The conclusions of recent reviews of the UNICEF evaluation function, including a peer review,[8] provide an indication of how evaluation in UNICEF might respond to the evolving demands and expectations. Key to that response is an evaluation policy that supports the development of an organization-wide evaluation function that encompasses the work of UNICEF at the global, regional and country levels and upholds UNEG norms and standards, including utility, credibility and independence.

9. The revisions to the evaluation policy are intended to support UNICEF in delivering the outputs of the theory of change for evaluation outlined in the annex: independent, credible and useful evaluations at the corporate, regional and country levels, delivered in line with UNEG norms and standards and the coverage norms of the evaluation policy (supported by enhancing the capacity and professionalism of UNICEF staff to conduct and manage evaluations and national evaluation capacity development); effective knowledge management of evaluation evidence and collaboration with other functions in UNICEF and partners to enhance learning from evaluations; demand generated for evaluation evidence and its use within UNICEF and by the Executive Board and partners. These outputs will support the delivery of the theory-of-change outcome: reinforcing the systematic use of evaluation evidence for learning, decision-making and accountability, guiding the effective design and implementation of programmes in UNICEF and supporting decision-making by partners for improved child well-being. This will support the theory-of-change impact: UNICEF and its partners deliver effectively on attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and the Strategic Plan targets for the realization of the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged.

III. Definition and purpose of evaluation

10. UNICEF follows the UNEG definition of evaluation as "an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using such appropriate criteria as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders".[9]

[6] United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). Norms and standards for evaluation (2016).

[7] See https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/iahe_guidelines.pdf.

[8] Development Assistance Committee/UNEG peer review of the evaluation function of UNICEF, July 2017; Joint Inspection Unit, Analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/6); Multinational Organization Performance Assessment Network, Institutional assessment of UNICEF (2016).

[9] UNEG, Norms and standards for evaluation (2016), p. 10.

11. Evaluation in UNICEF serves interrelated purposes in support of the organization's mandate. It supports learning and decision-making,[10] which in turn support better results for children. Evaluation also helps to hold UNICEF accountable for contributing to results for children, or for not doing so. The evaluation function supports the development of national evaluation capacity, undertaken in collaboration with Member States and entities of the United Nations system, which should enhance the provision of timely evidence at the country level on the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the fulfilment of the rights of all children.

IV. Evaluation norms and standards

12. To fulfil their purpose in UNICEF, evaluations should meet international norms and standards, including those of UNEG. Provisions in place for upholding the UNEG norms are outlined in table 1. Standards for evaluation are broadly outlined in section V; the Evaluation Office will prepare detailed guidance on these for the conduct of evaluations in UNICEF.

[10] Including decision-making for policy development, strategic planning and programme improvement.

Table 1
Provisions in UNICEF for upholding the norms of the United Nations Evaluation Group

United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) general norms	*Provisions in UNICEF for upholding UNEG norms*	
	Evaluation Office	*Regional offices, country offices*
Internationally agreed principles, goals and targets	Plans for evaluations at the corporate, regional and country levels should directly contribute to evidence for the realization of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant internationally agreed goals.	
Utility	Terms of reference should include provisions for the timely commissioning and conduct of evaluations and the dissemination of findings, and should specify the intended use of the evaluation and the intended users of evaluation results. All evaluations must have a management response produced in accordance with timelines set out in guidance issued by the Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office monitors and reports on the implementation status of management responses.	
Credibility	All staff with evaluation responsibilities undergo training in evaluation methods, integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations, results-based management, report writing and analysis.	
	A stakeholder reference group and/or a technical expert group that includes an independent stakeholder is established at the start of an evaluation. The Evaluation Office provides quality assurance for evaluations undertaken at the regional level.	A stakeholder reference group that includes the regional evaluation adviser and/or a participant external to UNICEF is established at the start of an evaluation. Regional evaluation advisers provide quality assurance for evaluations undertaken at the country level. Regional evaluation advisers, in consultation with the Evaluation Office, provide quality assurance and technical support to country offices in development of costed evaluation plans (CEPs).
	The Evaluation Office ensures the independent quality assessment of all evaluation reports.	
Independence	The Director of Evaluation prepares and submits to the Executive Board an independent plan for global evaluations and an independent annual report on the evaluation function in UNICEF. The Director of Evaluation is appointed by the Executive Director in consultation with the Executive Board and the Audit Advisory Committee,[11] reports directly to the Executive Director, and heads an independent evaluation function in UNICEF.	Heads of offices ensure the application of the provisions of the evaluation policy in the conduct of evaluations at the respective levels of the organization.

[11] The job description for the position of Director of Evaluation and information on the recruitment process, including the composition and recommendation of the selection panel, will be shared with the Bureau of the Executive Board and the Audit Advisory Committee.

United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) general norms	*Provisions in UNICEF for upholding UNEG norms*	
	Evaluation Office	*Regional offices, country offices*
	The budget for the Evaluation Office is approved by the Executive Board in the context of the UNICEF integrated budget. The Director of Evaluation has full discretion and control over the allocated resources.	The budget for the country-level CEP is approved by the Executive Board as part of the country programme document, whose budget includes resources earmarked for evaluations identified in the CEP. The financial framework accompanying annual or multi-year workplans of regional and country offices should include a line budget for evaluations.
	A pooled fund will be established to support evaluation capacity development, especially at the decentralized level; organization-wide professionalization; innovation in evaluation; and strategic evaluations. The evaluation of the UNICEF evaluation function is undertaken by an independent panel.	
Impartiality	The evaluation of corporate programmes and initiatives is undertaken by the Evaluation Office. Headquarters divisions invest in activities that lay the foundations for evaluations, including the establishment of baselines, the testing of new initiatives or pilots for scaling up and the undertaking of programme reviews for the purpose of continuous improvement in delivery.	Country programme evaluations are managed by the regional evaluation adviser, with support from the Evaluation Office.
	Evaluation managers at all levels of the organization manage evaluations in line with the norms and standards set out in the evaluation policy. Evaluations are undertaken by independent consultants/firms and dedicated evaluation staff from the Evaluation Office, or regional evaluation advisers.	
Ethics	All evaluation managers and evaluators conform to the ethical standards, code of conduct and norms and standards for evaluation of UNEG. All evaluation managers and evaluators conform to the UNICEF procedures for ethical standards, including those related to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. All evaluation consultants sign and uphold the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations system.[12] Risks, including potential conflicts of interest, are assessed before the selection of evaluation teams.	
Transparency	All completed evaluations are made publicly available in a timely manner,[13] as are associated management responses when finalized, unless otherwise informed by the provisions set out in Executive Board decision 2012/13 involving instances that include endangering the security of individuals when a report is made available.[14]	

[12] UNEG/FN/CoC (2008).

[13] The Evaluation Office issues guidance on the timelines for quality assessment and evaluation management response.

[14] This provision is in line with those set out in Executive Board decision 2012/13 in relation to the UNICEF audit function. The annual report to the Executive Board on the evaluation function in UNICEF will note if any evaluations have been withheld or redacted.

United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) general norms	*Provisions in UNICEF for upholding UNEG norms*	
	Evaluation Office	*Regional offices, country offices*
Human rights and gender equality	Evaluation planning, design, methodology and analysis explicitly addresses human rights, gender equality and sustainability aspects of the programme or policy to be addressed	
	Evaluation practice follows UNEG guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality.[15]	
	Key stakeholders, including girls and boys (when appropriate), women, marginalized groups, national partners and Governments, are engaged at relevant stages of the evaluation	
	Evaluation methodology explicitly addresses issues of gender equality and the empowerment of women	
	The quality assessment of evaluation reports includes an assessment against the criteria of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	
National evaluation capacities	The plan for global evaluations and country-level CEPs include provisions for strengthening national evaluation capacities	
	Evaluations are planned and conducted in partnership with national authorities, addressing issues relevant to the national agenda	
Professionalism	Every UNICEF staff member responsible for managing evaluations[16] undergoes basic training in upholding the norms and standards of the profession	
	Evaluators should be recruited or contracted on the basis of their professional knowledge, skills and experience	

[15] UNEG, Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations (2014). Available from www.uneval.org/document/download/2107.

[16] Every evaluation has a designated manager (e.g., evaluation specialist or staff member in a country office whose functions include evaluation, a regional evaluation adviser, or an evaluation specialist in the Evaluation Office). In addition, any staff member who has a role in managing evaluations should receive training.

V. Evaluation procedures and quality assurance

13. Evaluations should be properly planned, managed, effectively conducted and quality assured, and the quality of evaluation reports assessed systematically.

A. Evaluation planning

14. Evaluations should be adequately planned. Evaluation plans should contain an appropriate mix of evaluation types. Evaluation plans are prepared at various levels of the organization, specifically:

(a) The plan for global evaluations, a multi-year costed corporate evaluation plan, is prepared by the Evaluation Office and approved by the Executive Board in support of the UNICEF Strategic Plan and other corporate policies and strategies; it builds upon regional and multi-country evaluations and country-level evaluations and identifies the criteria for the selection and prioritization of corporate evaluations;

(b) Regional evaluation plans are prepared by regional offices for evaluating multi-country initiatives; they are costed, and build upon country-level evaluations and respond to the evaluation needs of the countries in the region;

(c) Country costed evaluation plans (CEPs) are prepared by country offices, with the participation of national Governments (General Assembly resolution 71/243, para. 48) and approved by the Executive Board concurrently with country programme documents (CPDs).

15. Evaluation plans should ensure the adequate coverage of evaluations, including in humanitarian situations, and appropriate preparation to ensure high quality. Plans should enable evaluations to respond to the critical challenges in the delivery of programmes; make provision for the timely delivery of products in accordance with decision-making schedules and programming cycles; and spell out how the use of findings and recommendations will be promoted.

16. Evaluations should yield evidence quickly enough to enable timely decision-making. Humanitarian evaluations should focus on yielding rapid and timely evidence to support decision-making in fast-changing humanitarian contexts. In the appropriate context, evaluations should address the connection between humanitarian and development programming.

B. Evaluation coverage

17. Adequate evaluation coverage is key to providing a representative, unbiased picture of UNICEF performance and ensuring that policies, strategies, programmes and advocacy are informed by relevant evidence at all levels of the organization. Table 2 outlines the expectations for evaluation coverage at the country, regional and corporate levels, along with responsibilities for evaluation management and quality assurance.

C. Management and conduct of evaluations

18. UNICEF is committed to excellence in evaluation and strives for rigour in the design, management and conduct of evaluations. Evaluations should be designed, conducted and managed in line with UNEG standards and those set out in the present policy. Staff responsible for designing, managing and conducting evaluations should conform to UNEG ethical standards. The Evaluation Office will ensure that staff

responsible for designing, managing and conducting evaluations have been trained in UNEG norms and standards and the ethics of the profession.

19. Provisions for upholding the UNEG norms in the management and conduct of evaluations are outlined in table 1. More-detailed steps for ensuring useful and credible evaluation results are:

(a) Management arrangements for each evaluation should ensure independence and impartiality. The designated evaluation manager should not be part of the team that designs and/or manages the implementation of the assessed policy, plan or programme. The designated evaluation manager supervises the selection of the evaluation team, manages the consultants and has the authority to hold them to a high standard of performance. The evaluation manager is ultimately responsible for the quality of the evaluation;

(b) Key stakeholders, including excluded groups and, as appropriate, children and young people, should be engaged at relevant points, starting with the design phase. The involvement of children and young people should follow appropriate ethical guidelines and requires approval in accordance with UNICEF procedure;[17]

(c) The evaluation team should be selected through an open, transparent process, with balance in terms of geographical and gender diversity, and should include professionals from the region or country concerned in the evaluation;

(d) Terms of reference should conform to UNEG standards, make provision for the eventual use of the evaluation and be shared with stakeholders to promote transparency and engagement;

(e) When deemed necessary by a preliminary risk assessment, an ethical review should be conducted by an objective, qualified body;

(f) The evaluation design and methods should be clearly presented in the inception report;

(g) The evaluation report should meet the reporting standards of UNICEF and, in the interest of accountability, be made publicly available.[18]

D. Quality assurance

20. Quality assurance should be undertaken for terms of reference, inception reports and evaluation reports and carried out by an external expert or staff member with no role in managing the evaluation. Regional offices provide quality assurance for evaluations managed by the country offices, and the Evaluation Office provides such services for those managed by the regional offices. The evaluation manager ensures that the appropriate entities carry out adequate quality assurance without incurring delays. Those entities providing quality assurance (i.e., regional offices and the Evaluation Office) are responsible for ensuring that recommendations for quality improvement are acted upon. The head of the office managing the evaluation signs off upon completion and presents it to the Evaluation Office for final quality assessment.

21. The quality of all evaluation reports is assessed by a specialist external to UNICEF. The Evaluation Office is responsible for ensuring that a credible quality-assessment process is established and that its results are shared with the commissioning office and made available to UNICEF management and the Executive Board. Periodically, the Office will undertake reviews of the quality-assessment system for all levels of the organization.

[17] UNICEF procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis (2015).

[18] See footnote 14.

Table 2
Evaluation coverage norms

Evaluation	*Frequency*	*Evaluation manager*	*Quality assurance*	*Accountability for management response and use of evaluation results*[19]
Country programme evaluation	At least once every two programme cycles, sequenced to feed into subsequent country programme document and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). At least once per programme cycle if monitoring and audit information points to a significant shift in the programming context or a significant increase in the level of risk.	Regional evaluation adviser	Evaluation Office	Representative, regional director
Country office-level thematic evaluations, including cross-cutting themes	At least one country thematic evaluation, country programme component evaluation or project evaluation per year for each country programme. For small country programmes,[20] evaluation frequency may be reduced to three per programme cycle.	Country office evaluation specialist/ staff member responsible for evaluation	Regional evaluation adviser/external experts	Representative regional director, division director
Evaluation of humanitarian action	Evaluation of level 1 (L1) emergencies must be included in country programme evaluations. Protracted L1 emergencies should be evaluated at least every three to five years.	Country office evaluation specialist/ staff member responsible for evaluation	Regional evaluation adviser	Representative, regional director, division director
	Short-term level 2 (L2) emergencies must be evaluated at least once. Protracted L2 emergencies should be evaluated once every three years.	Regional evaluation adviser	Evaluation Office	Representative, emergency management team
	Short term level 3 (L3) emergencies must be evaluated at least once. Protracted L3 emergencies should be evaluated once every three years.	Evaluation Office	Evaluation Office/ external experts	Representative, emergency management team
Corporate evaluations	Themes under each Strategic Plan Goal Area are to be evaluated during the Strategic Plan period, in accordance with the plan for global evaluations. Corporate evaluations will also focus on the cross-cutting priorities of the Strategic Plan, namely humanitarian action and gender equality, in their own right and as parts of thematic evaluations.	Evaluation Office	External experts	Deputy Executive Director, division director, regional director

[19] This relates to those with direct responsibility for the preparation and implementation of the management response and the use of the evaluation, recognizing that the Executive Board and the Office of the Executive Director have overall oversight and use responsibilities.

[20] As defined by the Field Results Group in UNICEF, small country programmes are carried out by offices with an annual expenditure (programme and operations) below $10 million.

Evaluation	*Frequency*	*Evaluation manager*	*Quality assurance*	*Accountability for management response and use of evaluation results*[24]
	Strategic Plan change strategies and enablers are to be evaluated in accordance with the plan for global evaluations.	Evaluation Office	External experts	Deputy Executive Director, division director, regional director
Evaluability assessments, evaluation syntheses, meta-evaluations	Coverage and frequency determined by commissioning office	Evaluation Office, regional evaluation adviser, country office evaluation specialist	Evaluation Office, regional evaluation adviser, external experts	Division director, regional director, representative
Reviews in support of policies, plans and strategies	Coverage and frequency determined by commissioning office	Headquarters divisions, regional offices, country offices	Evaluation specialists at relevant level	Representative, regional director, division director
Regional level multi-country evaluations	Coverage and frequency determined by the regional office	Regional evaluation adviser	External experts	Country representative, regional director, division director
Joint United Nations and system-wide evaluations, including UNDAFs and joint programmes and Strategic Plan common chapter	Coverage and frequency determined by interagency mechanism	Determined by inter-agency mechanism	Determined by inter-agency mechanism	Heads of United Nations entities, Governments, partners
Country-led evaluation	Coverage and frequency determined by partner Governments	Determined by Governments and partners	Determined by Governments and partners	Determined by Governments and partners

VI. Enhancing the use of evaluations

22. Evaluations that are not properly used represent wasted investment and missed opportunities for learning and improving performance. The use of evaluation findings and recommendations is driven by the examination of appropriate questions at the appropriate time. This means clearly linking country programme evaluations and multi-country evaluations to the country programme cycle; linking country-led evaluations to government planning cycles and the timing of advocacy initiatives; and linking corporate evaluations to the UNICEF planning and budgeting cycle and the mechanisms established by Member States to review progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Use is also dependent upon the credibility of the evaluation, which in turn is dependent upon rigour, impartiality and professionalism.

23. The use of evaluations is enhanced by the selection of the appropriate type of evaluation for the needs at hand. The Evaluation Office offers guidance on the appropriate types of evaluation for the diverse contexts in which UNICEF works and the diverse purposes of evaluation, including, for example, evaluability assessments, appropriate use of formative evaluation, as well as summative evaluations and syntheses.

24. Evaluation usage is also dependent upon the timely delivery of evaluations. Evaluations should be undertaken at the appropriate time to support decision-making and programme adjustments. The Director of Evaluation will provide guidance on improving the timeliness of evaluations, including those for fast-changing humanitarian contexts, and on the timing of country programme evaluations so that their findings can feed into the UNDAF and the next country programme. The quality of evaluation recommendations also has an impact on usage, and the Evaluation Office will provide guidance on improving them.

25. All levels of the evaluation system should invest in technologies to advance evaluation usage. Key to this is the effective communication and dissemination of evaluation results and syntheses. All evaluations should have a dissemination plan at the outset and, in accordance with UNEG guidance, evaluation reports and management responses should be made public. The demand for evaluation can be enhanced by the provision of evaluation results in forms that are usable by decision-makers, including, for example, communication tools tailored to their specific needs.

26. Evaluations are of limited value unless timely steps are taken to implement their recommendations and incorporate lessons into decision-making systems. UNICEF offices must prepare a formal management response to evaluation recommendations and make arrangements to maximize the use of evaluation results. Managers within UNICEF should also create opportunities to feed evaluation recommendations into key decisions taken in UNICEF offices. The Evaluation Office will maintain a system for management to record and report on the status of implementation of management response actions. For the purposes of accountability, the Office may periodically undertake an assessment of management response implementation throughout the organization. For the purposes of learning and continuous improvement, the Office will establish guidelines for iterative approaches to the evaluation of programmes. Table 2 spells out the levels of management expected to be key users of evaluations.

27. Knowledge management is a key aspect of institutional learning. The Evaluation Office creates syntheses of evaluation findings, issuing them as reports that are shared with the Executive Board and made public. Such syntheses may lead to thematic recommendations for the organization or, in the case of joint work, for multiple United Nations agencies.

VII. Complementarity with other accountability and learning functions

28. Evaluation is one of several distinct complementary functions, which include child rights monitoring, performance monitoring and broader results-based management, research and audit. These functions can support an enabling environment for evaluation and enhance the conduct of evaluations and their use. Data from monitoring and research informs evaluation; methods from research complement those used for evaluation; and audit findings help to shape evaluations and contribute to assessments of organizational efficiency. While maintaining its independence, evaluation in UNICEF will coordinate with those complementary functions.

29. The Evaluation Office coordinates its work with that of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, in particular to inform the timing and frequency of country programme evaluations (see table 2). The Evaluation Office also coordinates the planning of evaluations with the research and data functions of the organization, with the objective of greater efficiency in the generation and use of evidence. The Evaluation Office will collaborate with divisions responsible for performance monitoring to ensure the periodic review of the quality of performance information that can inform evaluation.

VIII. Governance of evaluation

30. The UNICEF institutional architecture, which supports the implementation of the evaluation policy, is outlined below.

A. Executive Board

31. The Executive Board endorses the evaluation policy, considers annual reports on its implementation and on the status and effectiveness of the evaluation function and issues decisions conveying expectations and guidance on improving performance; approves CEPs as part of CPDs; approves the plan for global evaluations; and draws on the findings and recommendations of evaluations and evaluation syntheses for the purposes of governing the organization. As part of the approval of the integrated budget, the Board approves the budget of the Evaluation Office. The Executive Board is consulted by the Executive Director on the appointment of the Director of Evaluation.[21]

B. Executive Director

32. The Executive Director safeguards the integrity of the evaluation function; fosters a culture of learning, continuous improvement and accountability at all levels of the organization; creates demand for evaluation evidence; ensures that evaluation recommendations are acted upon; provides opportunities for the use of evidence; and supports the provision of the human and financial resources necessary for the evaluation function. The Executive Director consults the Executive Board and the Audit Advisory Committee on the appointment of the Director of Evaluation.

[21] See footnote 11.

C. Audit Advisory Committee

33. The Audit Advisory Committee, which includes an external expert on evaluation, advises the Executive Director on matters pertaining to the oversight of the evaluation function, including on upholding the norms and standards set out in the evaluation policy. The Committee advises the Executive Director on the implementation of the evaluation policy, including on the role of the Evaluation Office in strengthening oversight and learning and the responsiveness of the management of the organization to evaluation. The Audit Advisory Committee is consulted by the Executive Director on the appointment of the Director of Evaluation.[22]

D. Director of Evaluation

34. The UNICEF Director of Evaluation reports directly to the Executive Director, and heads an Evaluation Office that is functionally independent within the organization.

35. The Director of Evaluation is appointed by the Executive Director in consultation[23] with the Audit Advisory Committee and the Executive Board, with an external evaluation expert as part of the selection panel. The Director of Evaluation is appointed for a term of five years, renewable once for a maximum of five years, and is barred from re-entry into the organization after the expiry of his/her term.

36. The Director of Evaluation has accountability for the oversight of the evaluation function throughout UNICEF and leads the implementation of the evaluation policy within the organization, including through:

(a) Establishing and updating the evaluation policy; setting performance standards for evaluation across UNICEF and monitoring achievement against those standards; and providing an independent report annually to the Executive Board on the implementation of the evaluation policy;

(b) Preparing and periodically revising the plan for global evaluations, laying out strategic priorities for evaluation, identifying major corporate thematic evaluations to be undertaken independently by the Evaluation Office and ensuring adequate resources for the implementation of the plan and for support to the funding of evaluations and evaluation capacity development throughout the organization;

(c) Designing, commissioning and managing independent corporate evaluations that meet international standards for best practices and ensuring the timely dissemination of the results for action by management and other stakeholders;

(d) Establishing a comprehensive assessment system to gauge the performance of the evaluation function and the quality and coverage of UNICEF evaluations undertaken throughout the organization; ensuring that evaluations at all levels meet the standards set out in the evaluation policy; maintaining systems to monitor and report on management responses to evaluation recommendations and comprehensive databases to facilitate public access to all UNICEF evaluations and management responses; and informing the Executive Director and the UNICEF Global Management Team, staff and UNICEF stakeholders about relevant and useful evaluation results;

[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.

(e) Promoting the use of evaluations and knowledge management for evaluation, including through innovative approaches;

(f) Promoting strategies and systems to build internal evaluation capacity, including the technical review of candidates for evaluation positions; providing guidance and support to offices in designing and staffing the function and to staff in long-term career development; and implementing strategies to enhance the professionalization of the function;

(g) Developing and sharing innovative approaches and methodologies for evaluation work, particularly methods for improving the timeliness of evaluations;

(h) Promoting partnerships, especially by promoting the national ownership and leadership of evaluation activities; supporting global partnerships and networks and working through them to support innovation and evaluation capacity development; engaging with UNEG to harmonize evaluation norms and practices and to build United Nations evaluation capacity; and contributing to United Nations system-wide evaluations.

E. Evaluation Advisory Panel

37. The Evaluation Advisory Panel is an independent, external body, appointed by the Executive Director, that advises the Director of Evaluation on the implementation of the evaluation policy, the plan for global evaluations and other global policy documents; recommends improvements to evaluation methodologies, procedures, quality-assurance mechanisms and management responses; and recommends innovative ways to speed up the conduct and use of evaluations, including improvements to knowledge-sharing and dissemination.

F. Global Evaluation Committee

38. The Global Evaluation Committee creates opportunities for the use of evaluation evidence and follows up on the implementation of management responses. The Committee, which meets at least three times per year, is chaired by a Deputy Executive Director, as assigned by the Executive Director, with membership comprising all other Deputy Executive Directors, relevant divisional directors, the Director of Internal Audit, the Director of the Office of Research and all regional directors.

G. Headquarters division directors

39. The headquarters division directors support activities that enable evaluations, including establishing baselines and testing new initiatives or pilots for scaling up; undertaking programme reviews for continuous improvement in delivery; ensuring access to data and information for evaluations and the timely preparation and implementation of management responses to evaluations; promoting the use of evaluation results for decision-making and improved programming and operations; and supporting evaluation capacity development.

H. Regional directors

40. At the regional level, the regional directors ensure the upholding of the evaluation policy norms and standards in the management and conduct of evaluations, the timely preparation of evaluations and management responses and access to data

and information. They also oversee the implementation of management responses; promote the use of evaluation results for decision-making and improved programming and operations and respond to performance information regarding evaluation. They promote evaluation capacity development and strategies for the adequate financing of evaluations and monitor the allocation of adequate funds by representatives for evaluation.

I. Regional evaluation adviser

41. For the regional evaluation adviser, the regional director provides management oversight and guidance, and the Director of Evaluation provides technical guidance as follows:

(a) Develops and leads in the implementation of a regional strategy and annual work plans for thematic and multi-country evaluations in the region (reports to the regional director);

(b) Provides technical support and quality assurance to the country offices for the planning, management and conduct of evaluations towards the improved timeliness and credibility of evaluation products (reports to the regional director);

(c) Prepares and disseminates reports on the management of the evaluation function to the Regional Evaluation Committee, the Regional Management Team and the Evaluation Office (reports to the regional director);

(d) Contributes to efforts by the Evaluation Office to strengthen technical oversight for evaluation management processes across the organization towards greater responsiveness, improved timeliness and quality and the better utilization of evaluation products in the region (reports to the Director of Evaluation);

(e) Contributes to reinforcing the strategic involvement of UNICEF in national evaluation capacity development and UNDAF evaluation as well as joint evaluations with Governments and other development actors (reports to the regional director);

(f) Provides UNICEF inputs into and coordinates effectively with regional inter-agency evaluation mechanisms, intergovernmental forums and other regional partnerships and organizations relevant to the evaluation function (reports to the regional director);

(g) Contributes to efforts by the Evaluation Office to develop and facilitate the utilization of innovative products and processes in the area of evaluation methodology, evaluation management and the use of evaluations (reports to the Director of Evaluation);

(h) Contributes to efforts by the Evaluation Office to implement initiatives towards the professionalization of the evaluation function (reports to the Director of Evaluation);

(i) Manages country programme evaluations and multi-country thematic evaluations (reports to the regional director);

(j) Keeps abreast of developments in the field of evaluation and knowledge management and provides/coordinates regional contributions and recommendations in connection with the development and implementation of the evaluation policy, global evaluation plan and related strategies and guidance (reports to both the regional director and the Director of Evaluation).

J. Representative

42. At the country level, the representative ensures the upholding of the norms and standards set out in the evaluation policy in the management and conduct of evaluations; the preparation of CEPs that provide timely evaluation evidence for the integration of evaluation into country programme review processes; the skills needed by staff to meet their evaluation accountabilities, including relevant professional development opportunities; and the appropriate integration of evaluation into staff performance reviews.

43. The representative also provides adequate financial and human resources for the implementation of CEPs; oversees the preparation of management responses; monitors action to implement agreed recommendations; promotes the use of evaluation results for decision-making and improved programming; responds to performance information regarding evaluation activities in the country office; works with the United Nations country team to integrate evaluation evidence into the UNDAF and inter-agency work; promotes joint evaluation work with United Nations system entities and other partners, including UNDAF evaluations; advocates for and promotes national evaluation systems; supports efforts to strengthen evaluation capacities in government, parliaments, civil society and other partners, including through Sustainable Development Goals evaluation and reporting; and supervises the evaluation functions of staff members with evaluation management responsibilities.

K. Country office evaluation specialist (or staff assigned to manage evaluations)

44. The country office evaluation specialist[24] manages evaluations at the country level in accordance with the evaluation policy norms and standards, including those for quality assurance; compiles the list of intended evaluations to be included in CEPs and annual monitoring and evaluation plans, and applies the UNICEF taxonomy to determine which products are to be treated as evaluations; engages competent evaluators who conduct their work in accordance with the evaluation policy norms and standards; supports the development and implementation of management responses; promotes the use of evaluation results for decision-making and improved programming; and supports the design, implementation and use of country-led evaluations.

IX. System-wide evaluation and partnerships

45. UNICEF will collaborate with other United Nations entities and UNEG to respond to the decisions of Member States regarding system-wide evaluation. The organization will seek out opportunities with other United Nations agencies and, at the country level, in consultation with national Governments, for the joint evaluation of joint programmes, the common chapter of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and the UNDAF, recognizing the benefits of promoting learning within the United Nations system, shared accountability and reduced transaction costs. UNICEF will contribute to the application of UNEG norms and standards in all joint evaluations.

46. UNICEF remains committed to improving its performance against key indicators set out in the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality

[24] Or staff assigned to manage evaluations.

and the Empowerment of Women, the aim of which is to ensure that gender analysis is used to inform evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

47. UNICEF will maintain partnerships in support of the aims of the evaluation policy, including with United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, Governments, evaluation associations, non-governmental organizations, foundations and academic institutions. It will also support the work of UNEG in enhancing partnerships for evaluation.

X. National evaluation capacity development

48. Evaluation in UNICEF follows the organization's commitment to the principles of national ownership and leadership of development processes at the country level. UNICEF seeks to help national authorities to evaluate their own programmes and to contribute to the strengthening of evaluation capacity in countries. Where possible, UNICEF evaluations should be planned and conducted in partnership with national authorities, addressing issues relevant to the national development agenda.

49. In line with General Assembly resolutions 70/1, endorsing the 2030 Agenda, and 69/237, on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level, and with the 2016 QCPR, UNICEF will continue to support national evaluation capacity development. The organization will focus its support on: (a) strengthening national evaluation systems to be child responsive; (b) the evaluation of actions towards the Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to the UNICEF mandate; (c) the generation of evidence to inform national processes and reports on progress towards the achievement of the Goals; and (d) advocacy for country-led evaluations and the use of evidence from such evaluations.

50. In addition to working with a range of stakeholders,[25] UNICEF will partner, to the extent possible, with national centres of excellence to improve evaluation capacity at the country level.

51. UNICEF will also pursue partnerships with evaluation units of government departments and evaluation agencies to ensure the credible and timely evaluation of child-focused national programmes. Such country-led evaluations may provide the opportunity for UNICEF to support national evaluation capacity development in areas related to the UNICEF mandate.

52. When UNICEF is a partner in, but does not commission or manage, an evaluation, the specific provisions of the present policy do not apply. Nevertheless, UNICEF will promote adherence to international evaluation norms and standards in such situations.

53. A strategy to guide UNICEF support to national evaluation capacity development, in the context of working with other United Nations entities, will be developed by the Evaluation Office and reviewed periodically to ensure that such capacity-development activities remain effective.

[25] See para. 45.

XI. Resources

A. Human resources

54. The evaluation function requires skilled human resources to manage evaluations and to provide effective quality assurance. The most significant human-resource requirement is at the country level, where the largest proportion of evaluations is carried out. The Evaluation Office and regional offices will support the identification of consultants by maintaining a quality-controlled roster of evaluators.

55. Country offices should establish adequate capacity for evaluation management. Evaluation responsibilities are often undertaken by staff who also hold other responsibilities, such as monitoring, research and planning. In order to ensure dedicated evaluation positions, country offices may decide (in large programmes) to establish an evaluation specialist post, while smaller offices may pool resources with other UNICEF offices to fund a multi-country post dedicated to evaluation. Where such arrangements are not possible, staff with responsibility for evaluation should be supported by the representative to devote adequate time to evaluation duties and to report on them to the representative. Arrangements should be made by the representative to ensure the integrity of the evaluation function, in particular the application of the provisions of the evaluation policy.

56. Regional offices will have at least one P5-level staff member fully dedicated to evaluation activities. Incumbents must meet the requirements of the UNEG competency framework. A significant responsibility of the regional evaluation adviser will be to provide technical assistance and quality assurance for country-level evaluations. Such services may be provided directly by the regional evaluation adviser or through long-term agreements or similar arrangements with consultants or centres of excellence.

57. The Evaluation Office staff, including its Director at the D2 level, will meet the requirements of the UNEG competency framework. The Director of Evaluation will ensure that the staff of the Evaluation Office and the regional evaluation adviser have evaluation management and leadership skills and experience aligned with UNEG evaluation competencies.

58. All staff with evaluation responsibilities will undergo capacity development arranged by the Evaluation Office to improve their professional skills, including on gender-based analysis, human rights approaches and results-based management. Additional opportunities for professional development will be identified with a view to ensuring that evaluation staff demonstrate core competencies as outlined in the UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework. Training opportunities and technical support in evaluation will be provided for programme managers.

59. Where feasible, UNICEF will support staff in the pursuit of a career in evaluation by ensuring the possibility of rotation across evaluation positions.

B. Financial resources

60. High-quality evaluations and the evaluation function more broadly require the necessary investment of financial resources. Globally, to meet minimum evaluation coverage in accordance with the evaluation policy, UNICEF will allocate at least 1 per cent of its overall programme expenditure to evaluation. Planning studies, monitoring, surveys and research must be financed separately from evaluation. The Evaluation Office and regional offices will monitor expenditure on evaluation globally and in their respective regions, with the objective of achieving that target.

61. In country offices, resource allocation decisions for evaluations are based on the CEP. Budget allocations for evaluation should reflect the aims set out in the CEP.

62. Regional offices and the Evaluation Office should follow similar steps in mobilizing support for regional plans and the plan for global evaluations.

63. The Executive Director will establish a pooled fund to support evaluation capacity development, including for conducting and managing evaluations, especially at the decentralized level; professionalization throughout the organization; innovation in evaluation; and strategic evaluations. By emphasizing capacity development, the pooled fund will promote an enabling environment for offices to invest more in evaluation towards the organizational goal of at least 1 per cent of programme expenditure.

XII. Risks

64. The theory of change identifies several risks to achieving expected outputs and outcomes of the evaluation function. The Director of Evaluation will work with the management of UNICEF to continue to promote and support evaluation within the organization, and to ensure adequate and sustainable funding for the evaluation function. The Evaluation Office will work with all levels of the organization to support the adoption and application of norms and standards for other complementary functions and to support the development of an evidence-based culture within the organization. The greater use of evaluability assessments will help to ensure that programmes are evaluable. Most difficult to address is the risk of insufficient evaluation experts, especially at the country level. This risk will be mitigated by support to national evaluation capacity development, enhancing the skills of UNICEF evaluation staff and the use of rosters to undertake quality evaluations.

XIII. Implementation, reporting and review

65. UNICEF will issue appropriate instructions to carry forward the effective implementation of the evaluation policy, including an executive directive outlining implementation responsibilities. Guidance will be issued by the Evaluation Office to complement the policy.

66. The status of implementation of the evaluation policy will be reported by the Director of Evaluation to the Executive Board as part of the annual report on the evaluation function, which will include: (a) progress towards achieving the outputs identified in the theory of change for the evaluation function, including evaluation capacity development; (b) a presentation of the evaluations, evaluation activities and achievements of the Evaluation Office during the previous year and the programme of work for the current and following year;[26] (c) a factual description of evaluations undertaken by other parts of the organization, together with an assessment of the status, quality and utility of the evaluations; (d) progress on the status of implementation of actions agreed in management responses to evaluations; (e) a synthesis of the main findings, conclusions and lessons from evaluations of the performance of UNICEF, including evaluations of the performance of the evaluation function; and (f) an examination of challenges met on methodologies for conducting evaluations, and approaches and processes, particularly as they relate to the use of evaluations.

[26] This will also reflect on achievements relating to the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

67. The annual report on the evaluation function in UNICEF will be accompanied by a management response, also presented to the Executive Board.

68. An independent review on the performance of the policy will be required. It is therefore proposed that such a review be undertaken in 2022.

Annex

Theory of change for the evaluation function in UNICEF

The theory of change for the evaluation function in UNICEF outlines how evaluative activities will contribute to UNICEF and its partners delivering on attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and the targets of the Strategic Plan and supporting the progressive realization of the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged. The theory of change will inform indicators for the evaluation function.

Approaches
Improving the independence, impartiality and *credibility of all* evaluations
Improving quality-assurance mechanisms and processes
Using gender and human rights-responsive methods in all evaluations to understand impacts on all, including the most disadvantaged
Adopting innovative approaches to deliver evaluations that are timely and respond to organizational needs
Enabling the use of evaluation results
Professionalizing the evaluation role within UNICEF
Supporting national evaluation capacity development and Sustainable Development Goal evaluation, especially through inter-agency partnerships
Impact
UNICEF and its partners deliver effectively on attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and the Strategic Plan targets for the realization of the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged.
Outcome
Evaluation evidence is systematically used for learning and accountability, guiding the effective design and implementation of programmes in UNICEF and supporting decision-making by partners for improving child well-being
Output
Independent, credible and useful evaluations at the corporate, regional and country levels, delivered in line with UNEG norms and standards and the coverage norms of the evaluation policy (supported by enhancing the capacity and professionalism of UNICEF staff to conduct and manage evaluations and national evaluation capacity development)
Effective knowledge management of evaluation evidence and collaboration with other functions in UNICEF and partners to enhance learning from evaluations
Demand generated for evaluation evidence and its use within UNICEF and by the Executive Board and partners
Drivers/inputs
Evaluation policy
Evaluation planning (corporate, global, regional, country levels)
Evaluation resources (human, financial)
Guidance and tools on effective evaluation
Evaluation quality-assurance systems and processes
Systems for monitoring evaluation activities, including key performance indicators at all levels
Partnerships for evaluation, including for country-led and joint evaluations
Evaluation capacity development within UNICEF and its partners
Assumptions and risks
Organizational leadership and support
Sustainable and predictable funding for evaluation
Availability of skilled human resources
Evaluable policies and programmes
The building of an evidence culture in UNICEF
Timely presentation of management responses to the Executive Board and timely follow-up action
Adoption of monitoring and research norms and standards for the organization
Continuous application of the audit charter